

2 NEWS

Sketch



Simon Hoggart reveals his roll of dishonour as MPs begin their long summer holiday



The Tories launched their spoof Labour manifesto at a wine-making press conference... outright winner in the PR cock-ups category



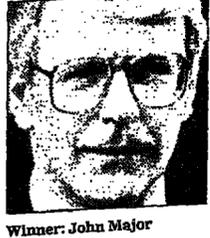
Winner: Baroness Thatcher



Winner: Nicholas Winterton



Winner: Roger Freeman



Winner: John Major



Winner: Alastair Campbell



Winner: Michael Fabricant

Winning ways in cowardice and cock-ups

PARLIAMENT rose last night until October. Naturally, there will be the usual bleats about MPs' long holidays. But if you had to sit there every day, you might well think that the more they are on vacation, the luckier we will be.

book which was generally panned; his agent asked the Guardian half a million for the serial rights. (The alternative suggestion was 37p, and I am pleased to report that the final figure was closer to the latter than the former.)

tees. He produced the most boring three words of the session: "seventhly, Madam Speaker".

means new communities so that everyone is in bed by 10pm, and not out shopping as they are under the Tories.

First night

Who's that tap tap, tapping on heaven's door?

Keith Watson
Lord Of The Dance London Coliseum
YOU'VE got to have a monster ego to put on a show called Lord Of The Dance and then give yourself the starring role. But one thing Michael Flatley is not short of is self-confidence.

Minutes reveal tycoon's interest in DSS

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent
THE Guardian's disclosure of a Tory property tycoon's secret talks to buy the nation's social security offices last night reignited the row over the Premier Club, the organisation where business people pay £100,000 to dine with John Major.

paper yesterday as the tycoon denounced the disclosure as "absolute lies" on BBC radio. Mr Beckwith, who is also Premier Club chairman, restarted the row over its privileged access to John Major by claiming the club did enable members to meet him.

insurance company. The minutes say Beckwith Property Fund Management were partners with US insurance company AIG.

The full text of the transcript

THE following is the transcript of the minutes of a meeting on February 21 this year between Beckwith Property Fund Management and Deloitte and Touche, management advisers to Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, on the sale of the benefit offices estates. The questions are by Deloitte and Touche and the replies by Beckwith directors.

than phasing it over time or splitting it into packages. A partnership arrangement, probably including an FM (facilities management) company, is favoured.

Renewing your home insurance in July or August? If you are 50 or over, just see how much you could save with Saga - call us NOW

Rifkind forces BBC to allow overview of World Service's newsgathering changes

continued from page 1 for the restructuring to be in place. John Tusa, a former managing director of the World Service and opponent of the changes, said: "Given the way the BBC has behaved, is this small step the minimum they

would concede to get their plan through?" The BBC's governors meet today and are expected to discuss an appeal, published in yesterday's Guardian, from 140 leading public figures to delay implementation.

penditure, and reprimand BBC executives for introducing changes without consulting the Foreign Office.

SAGA Services Ltd
Saga Services Ltd, FREEPOST 731 Middelburg Square, Folkestone CT20 1AZ

The Queen
TV viewing figures for the Queen's Christmas broadcast, millions.

1991	23.2
1992	19.8
1993	18.1
1994	15.7
1995	13.7

Source: BARB

Snub to BBC as traditional Christmas broadcast to be produced every two years by ITV



The BBC Panorama interview with the Princess of Wales, which annoyed and alienated Buckingham Palace

Queen changes channels

Andrew Culf
Media Correspondent

BUCKINGHAM Palace yesterday delivered an apparent snub to the BBC for its Panorama interview with the Princess of Wales by ending its exclusive responsibility for making the Queen's Christmas broadcast.

The move to share production of the broadcast between the BBC and ITV ended a 39-year tradition and was being interpreted by broadcasters as retaliation for Panorama's portrayal of a royal family beset by in-fighting.

Under the new arrangement, announced by the Queen's press secretary Charles Anson, ITV will produce the broadcast, transmitted throughout the Commonwealth on Christmas Day, in 1997 and 1998. Production reverts to the BBC in 1999 and 2000. The alternating two-year cycle will be reviewed periodically, he added. Both channels will screen the broadcast each year as usual.

The palace insisted there was no rift with the BBC and denied it had been taken in the wake of last November's interview by Martin Bashir.

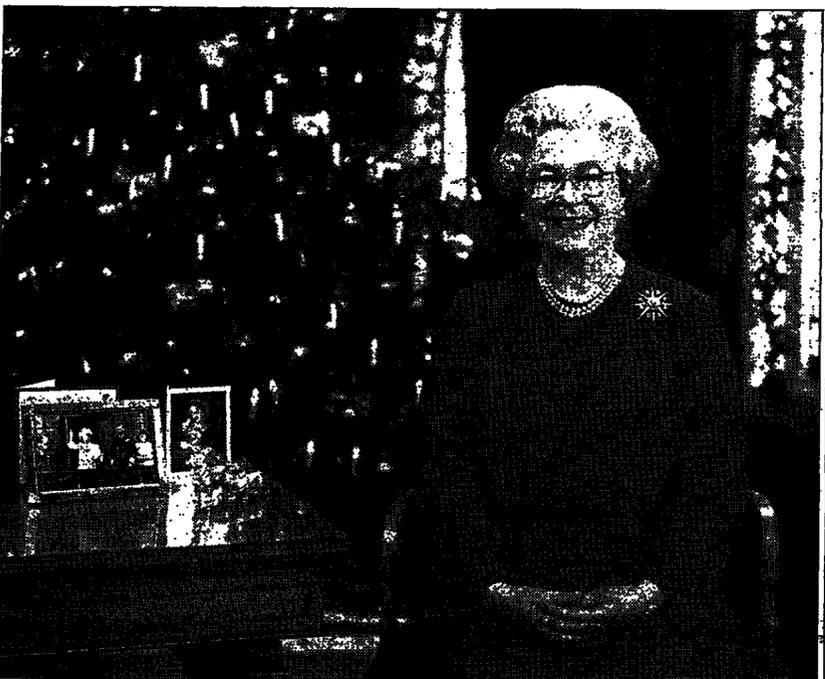
A spokesman said: "We were considering a change to the current arrangements in early 1995, before the Panorama programme was broadcast."

However, ITV was approached by the palace, which hinted darkly at the time of the interview that it might take action against the BBC. It said in November: "No institution can take for granted its relationship with the media, just as the media — in this case the BBC — cannot take for granted its relationship with us."

The BBC said it did not believe Panorama was the reason for the decision. A spokeswoman added: "In the contemporary broadcasting environment it makes sense for the leading public service broadcasters to share the responsibilities and costs of broadcasts of this kind."

The cost of producing and distributing the broadcast around the world is about £100,000 a year.

Audiences for the broadcast have fallen steadily. The 1995 address was watched by 13.7



The Queen's Christmas message to Britain and the Commonwealth has been produced exclusively by the BBC for 39 years

million viewers, most of them tuned to the BBC, a drop of 10 million in five years.

The 1996 broadcast will be made by the BBC's head of events programmes, Philip Gilbert, for the sixth year running. Next year, ITV will produce the broadcast, with radio distribution to 190 stations around the world being handled by its partners Independent Radio News.

Marcus Plantin, ITV's network director, said: "I am delighted that ITV has been given the opportunity to participate in the annual broadcast... It is a welcome acknowledgment of ITV's excellent and long-standing track record of quality news and factual programming."

The Queen's TV times

- ITV ran into controversy in 1994 when it contemplated moving the broadcast from its traditional 3pm slot.
- The Sun published extracts from the 1992 broadcast in advance; it was forced to apologise to the Queen and pay £200,000 in damages to charity.
- The BBC was also forced to apologise in 1997 when the contents leaked to six tabloid newspapers. Royal correspondent Michael Cole had discussed the broadcast with reporters at a private lunch.
- The first broadcast was on radio in 1932, made by George V, from Sandringham. The first television broadcast was in 1957.
- It has spawned the tradition of an alternative Christmas Day broadcast on Channel 4. Presenters have included Jesse Jackson, Quentin Crisp and Brigitte Bardot.
- The Queen headed into cyberspace for the first time in 1994 as the broadcast was transmitted on the Internet.
- Informality was introduced to the broadcast in 1986 by producer Sir David Attenborough when the Queen dispensed with her desk and was filmed at a children's Christmas party.

Business club with 'code of silence' loses appeal

Pyramid scheme illegal, judges rule

Sarah Boseley

A MYSTERIOUS and secretive get-rich-quick scheme that ensnared up to 10,000 people across the UK at evangelical-style meetings was ruled illegal by the Court of Appeal yesterday.

The German-based Titan Business Club, in which members who pay £2,500 to join earn money by recruiting more members on a pyramid-selling basis, has drawn in showbusiness personalities, senior professionals and even a member of the House of Lords. Few have spoken out because they are required to sign an intimidating document, which has no real legal status, promising silence on penalty of 10,000 Deutschmarks (about £4,500).

Yesterday the Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, said that all such operations break the law. "They involve those who set up, promote, purvey and administer the scheme in criminal offences," he said. "This I hope will deter those who may be tempted to create clones of Titan."

Titan, managed by the Hamburg company SHV Senator, was appealing against an order made by Vice-Chancellor Sir Richard Scott in June that no further "evangelical-style" recruitment meetings with music and chanting should be held to promote the club, pending an application by the DTI for it to be wound up and finally put out of business. Sir Richard called the scheme "an illegal lottery".

Jim Potts, chief trading standards officer in Lancashire, where the scheme seems to have had its UK launch in January, had over 200 inquiries and complaints about Titan. "We warned consistently that this is no more than a money circulation scheme. It is based entirely on being able to recruit other people. For some people to gain, other people must lose."

Potential members are told that they will soon recoup their joining fee, which recently went up from £2,500 to £3,000. They become a junior partner, and receive £450 out of the joining fee paid by members they recruit. When those members introduce new people, the junior partner becomes a senior partner and receives £770 out of the joining fee. The rest of the money goes to the German-based consul-

tants at the top of the pyramid. The catch is that there is always only a limited pool of potential recruits in any area. It is estimated that 7,000 out of 10,000 members of Titan will have lost money.

Schools, theatres and other large public buildings are used for recruitment meetings. Security guards lock the doors and loud inspiring music, typically the Chariots of Fire theme, blares out while lights flash and an evangelical-style salesman comes on to the stage for several hours of hard sell. People tell how their lives have been changed.

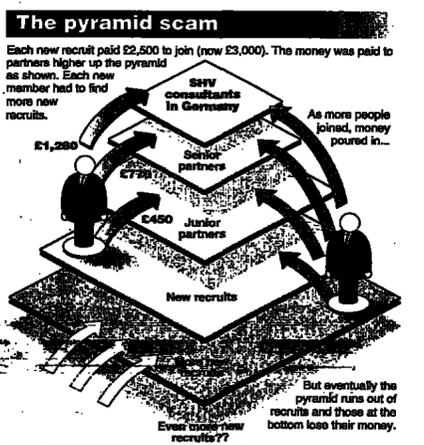
"There is almost a build-up of hysteria where people are signed up and sent out with a mission to recruit as many people as they can and make everybody rich," said Mr Potts.

One of the converts is Dec Cluskey, a member of the Bachelors pop group that won fame in the 1960s. He was recruited by a showbusiness agent in Brighton and has recruited two people himself — one of them his son, Oliver.

He is furious that the Department of Trade and Industry took legal action to get Titan closed down. "I stood to make an awful lot of money. I was looking forward to a very long life with Titan. I got my son involved and now I'm pissed off completely. My son had just finished university and was excited, and now the DTI has slapped his hand."

Newbury's Liberal Democrat MP, David Rendel, who at Easter told the House of Commons that Titan was "an iniquitous pyramid-selling scam", knows of people who are much less happy. "One of my constituents sent me an anonymous letter about the business and a copy of the form in which you have to promise not to tell anybody about it."

Jim Potts forecast that the winding up of Titan could choke the civil courts. He is advising members that they may be entitled to sue those — often friends and relatives — who have introduced them to Titan, using the Misrepresentation Act of 1987.



Food poisoning panic grips Japan

PM warns Japan to expect even worse as seven die, 8,500 fall ill

Mary Jordan in Sakai

SWIMMING pools are boarded up, playgrounds are empty. Anxious parents keep children at home and away from others. Nervous restaurant owners boil everything, even melons. A small plane equipped with loudspeakers flies low, warning citizens to wash.

Japan is in the midst of its worst outbreak of food poisoning in recent years, with seven dead and more than 8,500 ill. It has spread to almost every region, except the northern island of Hokkaido.

The prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, yesterday announced a crash programme to inspect food products to combat the spread of the "massive" epidemic, and warned that the outbreak was not expected to peak until August. He urged the public to get medical treatment at the first signs of any unusual symptoms.

More than 6,100 of the ill live in Sakai, an industrial city across Osaka Bay from Kobe. Most are children, including 600 who remain hospitalised. Two young girls — one with a cerebral haemorrhage and another with a damaged heart — are struggling to live.

Doctors believe virtually all those poisoned were infected by a strain of Escherichia coli bacteria called O-157, and many appear to have contracted it from school lunches.

Atsuka Tsuge, aged seven, wearing a glittery headband and clutching a favourite book about a pig that went shopping, said she never liked her school lunches, especially because teachers forced students to eat every bit. She has spent five days with severe pain and fever in a hospital overflowing with sick children.

"The anger and anxiety over what has happened is in every corner of this city," said her mother, Michiyo Tsuge. "We don't know where this came from and we don't know how to stop it."

Health officials have ordered schools in the hardest hit areas to test their water supply for O-157. They have also ordered food preparers to preserve left-overs for two weeks to help epidemiologists track the source of bacteria. A task force in Sakai's city hall is co-ordinating nationwide efforts. It has established an emergency hotline, and 500,000 leaflets are being distributed. In a country where meat is often eaten raw, people are being warned to cook everything.

The first cases of poisoning showed up in May in Okayama prefecture, in south-western Japan, causing the death of two children. On July 11, Atsuka and other children were taken to hospital, curled up in pain, with fever, vomiting and, in the

worst cases, kidney failure. Raw eel in sushi was first suspected, and still has not been ruled out, because many of the ill children ate it at school. But doctors believe a boy near Tokyo was poisoned by eating slices of raw beef liver, a delicacy. Authorities believe there may be several causes of the poisonings.

There are hundreds of strains of E. coli, most of which live in the intestines of animals and usually pose no threat to humans. E. coli bacteria are commonly found in the human intestinal tract. But the strain known as O-157 can damage the lining of the intestine, cause bloody diarrhoea, kidney damage and, in the severest cases, death.

In Japan, abattoirs are inspected by local government employees who visually check the meat. No government inspections are required in processing plants where meat is cut and packaged. Atsuka Oda, an official in the health ministry, said the government was now considering more stringent regulations. — Washington Post.

Some doubt whether, in the chaotic world of nature, real predictions can be made early enough to head off alien invasions. The best approach may be to identify not the species that could invade, but the ecosystems vulnerable to invasion.

OnLine G2 page 10

Oops.

We've dropped our mortgage rate again.

The cost of a Direct Line mortgage just keeps on falling.

As you can see from the table Direct Line can save you around £50* a month. And whether you're moving house or just moving your mortgage, there's no arrangement or survey fees. Mortgages are available for up to 90% of the property value or purchase price, whichever is lower, and there is no mortgage indemnity premium to pay. We don't charge early redemption fees either.

Just moving your mortgage? We'll also pay your legal fees if you call us by 31st August 1996 and complete the transfer using our solicitors package. We'll even guarantee to save you 20%* on your existing buildings insurance.

Now you know the facts, don't let the chance of a cheaper mortgage slip through your fingers.

Mortgage type	Direct Line	Woolwich	HALFORD	ASBEY NATIONAL	DIRECT LINE
2 Year Fixed Rate	5.5%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.5%
5 Year Fixed Rate	6.0%	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%	6.0%
Variable Rate	5.5%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.5%

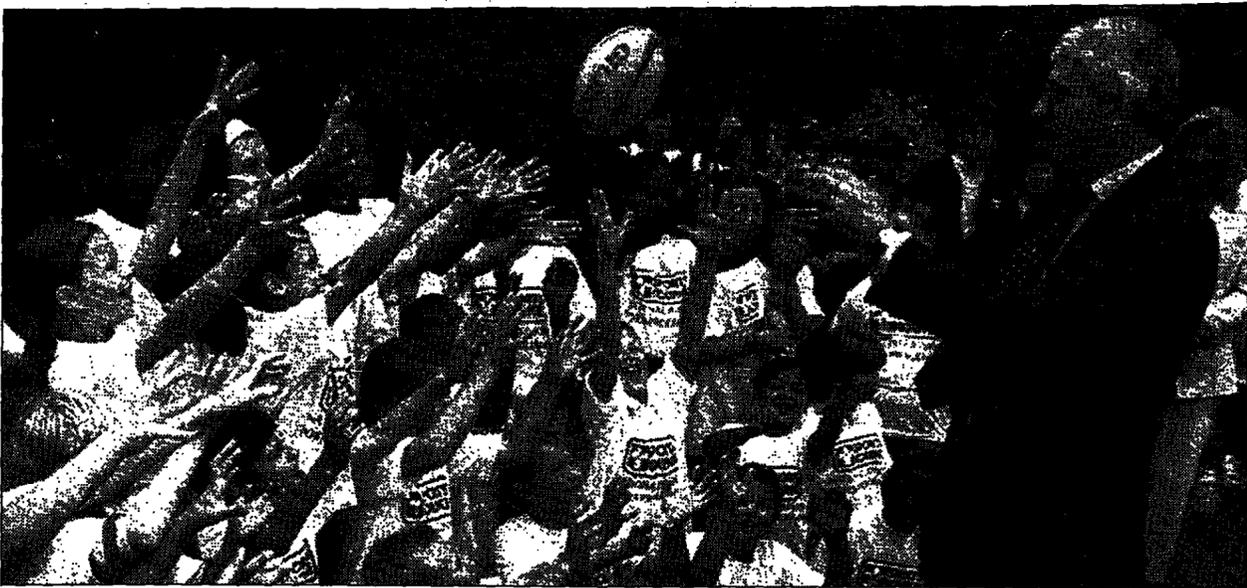
DIRECT LINE MORTGAGES

0181 649 9099 LONDON 0161 831 9099 MANCHESTER 0141 221 9099 GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. GA48

*Based on a £100,000 mortgage at 5.5% Direct Line rate compared to 6.0% competitor rate. Excludes arrangement and survey fees. Offer subject to credit checks. © 1996 Direct Line Mortgages. All rights reserved.

Labour claims credit for proposed academy of excellence financed by lottery money



Throwing a lifeline to sport... John Major shows off his rugby skills to youngsters during yesterday's gathering of sporting personalities in the garden of 10 Downing Street

Major lobs £300m into reviving sport

John Major yesterday held out the prospect of a glittering future for British sport with the help of a £300 million annual subvention from the National Lottery. But he failed to explain how thousands of schools would recover the playing fields they have been forced to sell or rediscover coaching enthusiasm among disillusioned teachers.

ence to develop a new generation of champions, using £100 million of lottery money. "I envisage a single central academy in up to 100 acres of land," he said. "The purpose is to provide an academy that will provide the best training, the best coaching, the best sports science, the best sports medicine, the best sports science for elite sports men and women."

range of technology and language colleges. There would be a "ladder of sporting opportunity" stretching down to primary school level where a new curriculum has been put in place to develop the skills needed for competitive games.

At a gathering of sporting personalities in the garden of 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister was reviewing progress since his policy paper on sport last year. Other initiatives include: A "university challenge" to establish 200 extra sporting scholarships by the time of the Sydney Olympics in four years.

have to be consulted about sales of playing fields. From September all schools will have to report to parents on their sports provision and achievement in their prospectus and annual report. Labour welcomed the plans for a sporting academy and claimed credit for thinking of the idea first.

ming lessons rationed or abolished," he said. Sir Rhodes Boyson, a former headmaster and former education minister, said: "British sporting prowess has drastically slumped because of the decline of school sport since the withdrawal of teachers from voluntary activities in 1985 and the introduction of the 1,255 hours-a-year teacher contract. The number of physical education teachers has dropped over recent years by 20 per cent to 25 per cent, and a number of PE colleges have even closed."

Plan put forward to burn cattle as fuel in power stations

Rebecca Smithers and Alex Bellor THE Government yesterday signalled the go-ahead for a new scheme to deal with the cattle carcasses piling up as a result of the BSE crisis, which would enable them to be burned as fuel in power stations.

Trade and Industry yesterday slipped out the new regulations to allow power stations to use rendered meat and bones as fuel. The scheme is likely to prove controversial, but ministers consider it an acceptable alternative to burying carcasses, and one way of tackling the logistical problems of mass incineration.

religions to speak up against the proposals, saying: "Treating animals as a fuel is unthinkable." Roger Lilley, of Friends of the Earth, said he was concerned the emissions from power stations may pose health problems.

At the same time the agriculture minister, Douglas Hogg, announced a £29 million compensation scheme for beef farmers who may have lost out on cattle slaughtered between March 20 and June 30.

Judge in 'groping' case speaks out

Clare Dyer Legal Correspondent

THE judge condemned by women's groups for saying a policeman accused of groping colleagues' breasts should have received a "good kicking off" instead of facing trial took the unusual step of defending himself publicly yesterday.

probationers who accused PC Bridle were cross-examined. The prosecutor, having heard evidence from the policemen, felt he could not prove the offence. Anyone who believes no objection will be taken to his actions cannot be convicted of indecent assault, even if the victim does object.

BBC governors' accountability comes under public spotlight

Save the World Service Andrew Cuff Media Correspondent

IT IS three years since the BBC's governors were last thrust so uncompromisingly into the public spotlight. Then, they were debating whether the former chairman, Marmaduke Hussey, and the director general, John Birt, should resign after it had been revealed that Mr Birt had been employed by the corporation on a freelance basis so that he could reduce his tax bill.

My World Service Ben Okri

IT SEEMS astonishing to me that a nation should have a priceless asset and could so lightly throw it away. I can not think of any other nation, or indeed any civilisation, that has an organisation like the BBC World Service - one that generates in the world so much goodwill, is so trusted, and has such influence.

Who they are Sir Christopher Bland: Chairman since April 1996. Age 58. Chairman of NFC since 1994. Media experience: became millionaire working with Greg Dyke at LWT, ex-chairman IBA.

close interest in the impact of the proposals on World Service. Governors approached by the Guardian for comment did not return calls. The 12 BBC governors, who include representatives for the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish national regions, have limited experience of broadcasting. The youngest is aged 44, and the average age is 57.

Lord Nicholas Gordon Lemnox: Governor since 1990. Age 65. Ex-diplomat; ambassador to Spain 1984-90. Media experience: none. Margaret Spurr: Governor since 1993. Age 62. Chairwoman English National Forum. Media experience: none.

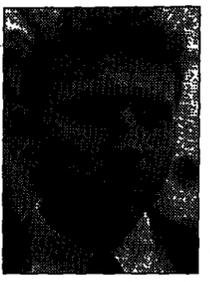
hanced role overseeing the BBC's management, and as guardians of the public interest, the traditional cloak of secrecy which surrounds their meetings is likely to be maintained. That is unlikely to satisfy the novelist and former governor P D James, who accused the chairman and director general of arrogance in the way they announced the restructuring. Nor will it appease the six former governors who have appealed for a rethink over the World Service changes.

Imran drops Botham from top bowlers

Vivek Chaudhary

IMRAN Khan, who should know a good cricketer when he sees one, claimed yesterday that when he gave an interview about the world's greatest bowlers tampering with the ball, Ian Botham did not feature in his mind.

swing. He said Botham was the greatest all rounder England had produced. Imran said the current furor over ball tampering started during the 1992 series between England and Pakistan. The tabloid press waged a campaign against the Pakistan team accusing them of ball tampering, using headlines like "Paki cheats."



Witness: England captain Mike Atherton yesterday



Former Pakistan captain Imran Khan yesterday

Benefit ruling blow for Lilley

THE Government faces a bill running into hundreds of millions of pounds after the law lords yesterday ruled that residents of many local authority old people's homes should have become eligible for income support when the homes were transferred to voluntary sector ownership, writes David Brindle.

setback for Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, in his drive to cut benefits spending. One in five social services authorities is expected to demand back-payments, as may some health authorities. Tad Kubisa, president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, said: "Local authorities have lost out very, very considerably over this."

'Red' Jessica Mitford dies aged 78 in California

Christopher Reed and Maggie O'Kane

JESSICA Mitford, the aristocratic English author turned Marxist who became famous for writing an expose of the US funeral business, the American Way of Death, has died, aged 78, in Oakland, California, where she lived since 1947.

Buy the mobile phone. Get the pocket TV free. Panasonic NEW GSM MODEL 350. 40 name/number memory stored on SIM. Up to 39 hours standby-time. Up to 170 mins talk-time. Data compatible. Dimensions 142x46x34mm. Weight 245g.

Panasonic NEW GSM MODEL 350. LIMITED OFFER £4.99 INC. VAT. The complete listening and viewing package from Cellphones Direct. Order the outstanding Panasonic 350 digital mobile phone today, and once you've had it connected, we'll send you this superb Casio 2.2 inch screen portable TV worth £99.99mm* entirely free of charge.

Cellphones Direct. ORDER NOW WITH YOUR CREDIT CARD DETAILS FOR FREE DELIVERY IN 4 WORKING DAYS. FREEPHONE 0500 000 888. CREDIT CARD ORDERING HOTLINE WEEKDAYS 9AM TO 9PM WEEKENDS 9AM TO 5PM.

Handwritten note: 2/25/96 1.50

Artist wins top portrait prize at first try

Don Gjalster
Arts Correspondent

A 25-YEAR-OLD artist from Derbyshire won the £10,000 National Portrait Gallery's BP portrait award yesterday with a self-portrait.

James Hague beat almost 800 entrants to win the prize, Britain's most prestigious portrait award, and will receive a £2,000 commission for the National Portrait Gallery's contemporary collection.

The award is seen as an important stepping stone for young artists and is credited with reviving the position of portraits in modern art. It is open to painters aged 18 to 40.

The prize was presented last night at the National Portrait Gallery in Trafalgar Square by Jonathan Miller. The second prize of £4,000 went to Peter Anderson, and the third prize of £2,000 to Mark McEdden.

It is the first time Mr Hague has entered the competition, which is now in its 15th year. In 1994, he completed a degree in fine art at the University of Northumbria, and has been painting in France and Spain since graduating.

The award gained minor notoriety three years ago when the winning entry, a double portrait by Philip Harris, showing himself and his girlfriend lying naked in a dry river bed, was censored in some newspapers.

Of the 772 entries, 63 will be exhibited at the gallery. The exhibition leaves London in November, opening at the Aberdeen Art Gallery on November 2.



A window in memory of the estate agent Suzy Lamplugh is unveiled today at All Saints Church, East Sheen, London, commissioned by her family from designer Alan Younger to mark the 10th anniversary of her disappearance while at work. Women, G2, page 4

Bribe claim dismissed

Andrew Gull
Media Correspondent

AN allegation by the fallen lottery bidder Richard Branson that he had been the subject of a bribery attempt was dismissed yesterday in a report published by the lottery's regulator, Peter Davis.

The inquiry, conducted by criminal barrister Anne Rafferty, was boycotted by Mr Branson, chairman of the Virgin Group, who denounced the report as "worthless".

His allegation against Guy Snowden, co-chairman of GTEch, part of the winning Camelot lottery consortium, was made on BBC1's Panorama last November. The

dispute between the two men is to be aired again in the High Court this year, each suing the other for libel.

Mr Davis, director general of the National Lottery, said he would take no action as a result of the report. Ms Rafferty concluded: "I am not able to find as a fact there was any attempt to bribe Mr Richard Branson on September 24, 1993."

In the Panorama interview, Mr Branson said Mr Snowden had tried to secure his withdrawal from the race for a lottery licence.

Mr Snowden said in a written submission that he refuted any untoward motive for his comments to Mr Branson at a working lunch at the latter's west London home.

Ms Rafferty said there was no hint that Camelot felt threatened by Mr Branson's bid, and the approach for lunch had come from him. She asked why it took Mr Branson two years to air his grievance.

Mr Branson said: "We expected the report to be worthless, and have not been disappointed. This is precisely why we refused to participate."

He felt the inquiry had not been sufficiently public and independent. He looked forward to the "verdict of a British jury, who will have had the chance of hearing both sides of the story."

A GTEch spokesman said: "GTEch are pleased that the Rafferty report has been published, and we welcome its conclusions."

Study to consider RUC methods and the need for marching code

Mayhew orders review of use of plastic bullets

Peter Hetherington
in Belfast

THE Government is to review the use of plastic bullets by the police in Northern Ireland along with the RUC's handling of marches and parades. It was announced last night.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said the Inspector of Constabulary would undertake a review of the RUC's procedures and training for handling public order situations.

The reviews were ordered in the wake of recent street violence following the Orange Order parade in Portadown which was first stopped and then permitted after loyalist disorder.

In answer to a written parliamentary question from

Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionist security spokesman, Sir Patrick said the review would take account of the disorder surrounding recent parades, including the Portadown stand-off when 6,000 rounds of plastic bullets were fired.

The review would also study the "need to ensure adequate protection of RUC officers faced with determined assaults and petrol bombers".

Sir Patrick also announced the terms of reference for a review of parades and marches.

He said the review would consider his own powers and those of the RUC, together with the adequacy of legislation.

It would also look at "the possible role for, and composition of, codes of practice for the organisers of and participants in public processions".

The reviews are expected by the end of this year or early next year.

The Police Authority for Northern Ireland welcomed the announcements. Chairman Pat Armstrong said the review by the Inspector of Constabulary should "provide an objective and professional assessment of the RUC's capability for handling public order situations".

He also welcomed the terms of reference for the review of parades and pledged the authority would play a full part "and will be encouraging all those in positions of influence to do so well as well".

— the Apprentice Boys' march, around the old walls of Londonderry, in two weeks' time.

With loyalists and nationalists on a collision course over the routing of the parade, both the Northern Ireland Office and the RUC have appealed to both sides to reach compromise locally. Instead, insults have been traded.

Apprentice Boys from throughout Northern Ireland were meeting in Londonderry last night to consider their next move.

But tensions have been raised further by the decision of the Bogside Residents Group to stage a march and rally tonight, from the loyalist enclave of the Waterside to the city centre, to commemorate the first civil rights marches 28 years ago. Unionist councillors say the march will be grossly provocative.

Crayfish threatens drought plans

Martin Wainwright
on 'grey squirrel of the river' plaguing Yorkshire Water

Killer crayfish

Male white-clawed crayfish, 10cm long



Eat the pest



WAYS to help with the signal crayfish problem:
□ Use old kippers as bait in a scumler (mesh net) at the suezyle (fishing station).
□ Remember: When the frost is up, crayfish sup.
□ Chant: "Ting-a-ling-ling! Come warm the pot. Old Man Crayfish wants it hot."
□ Eat a la Suede: plunge into boiling beer and saltwater, add bunch of fresh dill. Serve with ice cold pepper vodka.
Research by Caspar Will

AN armoured crustacean, cannibal and master of escape by government scientists, emerged yesterday as the latest threat to beleaguered Yorkshire Water's drought relief plans.

The firm is being threatened with prosecution if it institutes a proposed water transfer link to the Tees catchment in the North East.

Emergency pipelines would breach a legal no-go cordon for signal crayfish — imported as a delicacy from the United States but now the target of some of the Government's toughest wildlife protection measures — according to Friends of the Earth.

The American crayfish is condemned by naturalists as the "grey squirrel of the river" because of its destruction of the smaller British white-clawed crayfish in south of England river basins where imported animals have escaped from fish farms.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment Agency have published leaflets describing the signal as aggressive escape artists capable of wiping out entire populations of native crayfish within days through predation, competition and a virulent fungal disease, crayfish plague.

"We are confident the Environment Agency would have to bring a criminal case under the Government's protected species action plan introduced in May," said Matt Phillip of FoE.

He said the connection would breach amendments to the Wildlife and Countryside Act which have categorised the signal an invasive species and made assistance to its spread a criminal offence.

faces a raft of shareholder protests at its annual meeting in Harrogate today, acknowledged there was a problem following the discovery of signal crayfish in a Tees tributary whose water would be linked by transfer pipes to the rivers of North Yorkshire.

A Yorkshire Water spokeswoman said mesh screens would guarantee that signals could not enter the pipelines.

She said the plague, which is carried by signals but does not affect them, was being studied. She said: "There is no evidence that crayfish plague is present in the Tees and Tyne, but we are conducting the most intensive survey yet of the two rivers."

The plague has attracted a further range of draconian government measures, including a fishermen's code which warns that waders and clothes used in signal crayfish waters should be disinfected. Environment Agency guidelines instruct: "This procedure should always be followed before sampling is carried out in waters containing native crayfish."

The agency confirmed yesterday that signals had been found in the Tees catchment. A spokeswoman said the issue would have to come before the drought-relief public inquiry which would be required if Yorkshire decided to try to use the link.

Keeping you posted:

Customer advice about the Postal Strike

During the postal strikes, 24 hour telephone banking at First Direct will continue without interruption. However, some services by post may be affected and we have made special arrangements to keep inconvenience to a minimum.

Dates of the strike

Industrial action is due to take place on the following dates:

- Friday 26th July (24 hours)
- Wednesday 31st July to Friday 2nd August (48 hours)
- Tuesday 6th August (24 hours)

Sending cheques by post

Since cheques sent by post will inevitably be delayed please use your nearest branch of Midland Bank to pay in urgent credits.

We regret that customers in Scotland may find this difficult due to limited access to Midland Bank branches. Sterling credits can be made at other banks, but you may find you are charged for this.

Travel Orders

The despatch of First Direct Travel Orders (foreign currency and travellers cheques) will not be affected during the postal strike. Orders will continue to be despatched by registered post. Please note that where delivery to an address has been unsuccessful the sorting/collection offices will be open for collection.

Sterling and foreign drafts

If you request either sterling or foreign drafts from us we can arrange for you to collect them from your nearest Midland Bank branch. Certain Midland Bank branches will need at least 24 hours notice prior to collection. If you specifically request First Direct to post your draft you may experience a delay in receipt.

Cards/PINs/Cheque Books

For obvious security reasons, newly ordered cards will not be collected by the Royal Mail after a specified time in advance of the strike. This should ensure that

unsigned new cards are not in the Royal Mail offices during the strike periods. You may therefore experience delays in receiving your cards. Receipt of your PIN and new cheque books may also be affected.

Standing orders and direct debits

Again, direct debit mandates and standing orders posted to us will be subject to delays during the strike period. To avoid this we encourage you to set up standing orders with us by telephone.

Account Transfers

If you are transferring your bank account to First Direct from another bank there may be a delay in us receiving your previous bank account's balance in the post. If this happens extended credit facilities can be discussed with you. Transfers from Midland Bank to First Direct will be unaffected by the strike.

Mortgages

If you are arranging your mortgage through us and are concerned about delays, your dedicated mortgage counsellor will be happy to discuss this with you.

New Customers

You can apply to become a customer of the UK's leading 24 hour telephone bank anytime, we're always open. If you apply during the postal strike you may experience delays in the receipt of application forms to and from ourselves. Wherever possible, we'll advise you of these.

If you are an existing customer and have any queries, call us on:

0345 100 100

If you are not a customer and would like to know more about First Direct please call us on:

0800 24 24 24

first direct

For full written details of our services write to First Direct, FREEPOST, Leeds LS98 1FD. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. Calls are recorded and monitored. Applicants must be 18 or over. Member HSBC Group

Ireland declares war on 'untouchable' criminal gangs

Peter Hetherington
in Belfast

TOUGH measures to crack down on organised crime in the Irish republic, after a wave of drug-related and terrorist shootings, will be rushed through parliament in Dublin today.

Amid public outrage after the murders of an award-winning crime journalist and a policeman, MPs will back a wide-ranging law and order

package involving recruitment of more policemen, extra prison places, fast-track court procedures and restrictions on bail — subject to a referendum in November.

Centrepieces of the strategy will be a new special unit drawn from the Garda Síochána, the tax authorities and the departments of finance and justice, with powers to seize the assets of criminals, labelled the "godfathers" of Ireland's crime world by the Taoiseach, John Bruton. He

has warned them: "You are not untouchable." With 34 murders recorded so far this year — compared with a total of 45 for 1995 — and a sharp rise in other crime, Ireland's reputation as a largely law-abiding country has been tarnished.

Barry Galvin, state solicitor for Cork, warned recently that vigilante and terrorist shootings will escalate sharply unless drugs barons are targeted. The republic had become an "international

ally recognised" safe haven for people with criminal wealth. "They are living royally and quite openly with the proceeds of crime, particularly drugs," he said.

Pressure for tough measures came after the journalist Veronica Guerin, who had exposed a number of Dublin's criminal godfathers, was shot dead last month. Public anger had already been heightened by the murder of a policeman, Jerry McCabe, in Co Limerick three weeks earlier.

easyJet

0990 29 29 29

Finance Director's Dream Ticket

£35

↑ ONE WAY

easyJet

easyJet

→

Amsterdam

Cyber cafe life in San Francisco at 8.30am on a Tuesday was, well, Dewsburyish. I was in danger of panging my quarters to talk to myself.

Martin Wainwright

OnLine

rops from lers
one free
4.99
888

West heads for trade war

John Palmer in Brussels and Mark Train in New York

THE European Union and the United States edged closer to a trade war yesterday when President Clinton endorsed a bill empowering him to penalise companies investing in gas or oil projects in Iran and Libya.

The bill, introducing US sanctions against the two countries which Washington considers sponsors of terrorism, follows the threatened imposition of American penalties on non-US firms which trade with Cuba.

"It's time to take real action against terrorism and the countries that sponsor it. Now the nations of the world will know they can trade with them or trade with us. They have to choose," said Alfonso D'Amato, a Republican senator from New York and chief sponsor of the bill.

Iran condemned the US moves, saying they were certain to prove ineffective.

"It's nothing new, just the continuation of measures taken by American rulers to pressure independent countries," the foreign ministry said in Tehran.

As the White House signalled President Clinton's approval for the bill, which has already been backed by both houses of Congress, the European Commission in Brussels was discussing counter-measures. It is close to finalising a directive prohibiting any EU company from co-operating with US courts in cases where US corporations take action against them under the Helms/Burton (anti-Cuban) legislation.

The directive would allow European companies hit by US sanctions to sue for compensation in European courts. The European courts would be authorised to seize any assets in Europe held by an American company which

initiated legal action against European businesses. The draft counter-measures will come up for approval by EU governments early next week.

"This is a proposal designed to respond to the threat of sanctions against our companies in the case of trade with Cuba. But it will be open to the Council of Ministers to extend it to cover other countries, such as Iran and Libya," a Commission spokesman said last night.

The European trade commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, said: "The European Union shares American concern about international terrorism. Europeans have also

been the victims of terrorism in Lockerbie and other incidents. But this is not the way to go about tackling the problem."

The British government has led the demand in the EU for effective European measures to counter US sanctions. The Foreign Office said yesterday: "We agree that there should be a common Western policy on Iran and Libya. But we cannot accept US pressure on its allies to impose sanctions under the threat of mandatory penalties on our companies carrying out trade with these countries in the oil and gas sectors."

President Clinton is author-

ised by the D'Amato/Kennedy bill to penalise international companies where investment by them would "significantly enhance" Iran or Libya's production potential for oil or gas.

The French government criticised the US measure yesterday. A foreign ministry spokesman said: "We do not accept the principle of extra-territorial application of national laws." The French oil company Total, which has investments in two oilfields in Libya and signed a \$400 million deal last year to develop an Iranian offshore oil and gas field, has said it will continue undeterred.



Salomon Blomberg-Fetngold, aged 76, kisses the hand of his sister Rebecca, aged 79, on their reunion in Rehovot, Israel, after 60 years separation. Rebecca left Poland for Palestine in 1936 and thought her whole family had died in the Holocaust until Salomon was traced in Russia through a series of coincidences. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL JOSEPH-VEKOTCH

California vote fans racial heat

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

A NOTHER referendum on illegal immigration is being prepared by Conservatives in southern California, threatening to fuel hatred in a region already divided by racial strife.

The measure — drafted by the group that successfully lobbied for the discriminatory Proposition 187 — would make it an offence to let, sublet or sell property to illegal immigrants. It would enable businesses to sue competitors hiring workers without proper documents.

The aim, says the group, is to drive illegal immigrants back to their native country, usually Mexico, or into another state.

The proposed penalties for landlords include fines of \$3,000 to \$5,000 (£2,000-£3,300); two convictions could mean two years in prison for each offence. The penalties would be doubled for tax-exempt or non-profit organisations, a threat to the Roman Catholic Church's sanctuary movement, which provides shelter for illegal immigrants.

"This is designed to put priests' in jail," said Snow Hume, an anti-immigration campaigner. "We are seeking to put an end to the sanctuary movement."

Mr Hume outraged the state's Korean community last year when he addressed a mock Asian accent during a council meeting in Orange county. This deeply conservative and racist suburban area

south of Los Angeles is the base for campaigners promoting the new initiative.

Its opponents claim the initiative is as legally flawed as Proposition 187, which was passed with a strong majority in the 1994 elections. The supreme court found its provisions against providing health care and education to undocumented workers and their children unconstitutional.

The new measure may face the same fate, but its opponents say it is likely to force immigrants underground. Illegal workers feed a vast illicit economy by doing unpleasant, poorly paid jobs which most Americans reject.

Before Proposition 187 was voted on, tension grew between the communities in southern California, particularly in Orange county, which has a long history of racism. In 1994 high school students clashed violently over the proposition, resulting in at least two murders.

The organisers of the new proposition are risking a repetition of this murderous racial conflict. They need the signatures of 438,000 registered voters by November to put it on the 1998 ballot.

Its opponents say the measure would encourage landlords to discriminate against legally resident and even naturalised Hispanics.

By encouraging employers of immigrants to spy on each other, the new measure could also have unintended consequences. If illegal workers have nowhere to live, how will Orange county's citizens find their maids, gardeners, janitors and handymen?

Jostling to be the mourner-in-chief

Even disasters such as the TWA crash do not deter politicians from playing politics. Ian Katz reports from New York

THE mayor is at war with the airlines. The feds are furious with the governor. And the Republicans accuse the Democrats of failing to beef up airport security.

A week after TWA flight 800 crashed into the Atlantic off eastern Long Island, killing all 230 on board, investigators are still unable to establish the cause of the disaster. But one fact has emerged from the wreckage of the Boeing 747: politics does not stop when tragedy strikes.

The conflicting interests at work in the handling of the disaster were highlighted yesterday when angry relatives of the French passengers who died in the crash claimed that the United States had rejected offers of sophisticated French salvage technology for political reasons.

"I want my brother, I don't want politics," said Michael Oliver, one of the French relatives. He added that at the memorial service on Fire Island each speaker had thanked a

determination to track down the culprits, if there has been foul play. On the other, he would rather not acknowledge the enduring threat of terrorism during an Olympic Games on US soil and a presidential election campaign.

These conflicting interests have been reflected in the White House's confused and tentative handling of the crash. On Tuesday the chief of staff, Leon Panetta, suggested that circumstantial evidence of a bomb had been discovered. A White House spokesman, Mike McCurry, then flatly contradicted him.

The stakes are high for lesser politicians too. The coastguard had barely arrived at the crash scene before every panjandrum in New York state was in East Moriches, vying for air-time.

Rudolph Giuliani, the tough-talking New York mayor who makes it his business to show up at the bedside of any voter who so much as twists an ankle in news-

worthy circumstances, set his sights on TWA.

New Yorkers had scarcely had time to digest the horror of what had happened before he was lambasting the airline for taking 16 hours to tell relatives whether their loved ones had been on the plane. He also accused TWA executives of lying to him.

The perennially mournful governor, George Pataki, a sworn political enemy of the mayor's even though they are both Republicans, chose a different strategy. He spent much of his time at the crash scene and tried to be first with news of developments in the investigation.

The dangers of this approach were highlighted on Tuesday when crash investigators denied a claim by the governor that "dozens and dozens" of bodies, perhaps as many as 100, had been discovered in sections of fuselage found by divers on the seabed.

"We think the governor should not be making statements until he knows," said one relative, furious at seeing the hopes of the victims' families raised then dashed.

Banana workers challenge evictions

Larry Roher in La Lima, Honduras

FROM the moment American fruit producers installed themselves in northern Honduras a century ago, La Lima has been the quintessential company town.

For most of that time, the company's word has been law. But now workers on banana plantations are resisting efforts by Chiquita Brands International to evict residents from land that has been worked on by up to three generations.

The company wants to offer the holdings to ranchers and developers, and says it needs to trim costs to increase production and remain competitive.

Troops, police and government mediators have all been called in to resolve a dispute that the Roman Catholic bishops of Honduras described in a recent pastoral letter as "the symbol of all agrarian conflicts". But that seems only to have fanned popular resentment of the corporation once known as the United Fruit Co.

The company wants to

Banana workers challenge evictions

show the government and Hondurans that they continue to be the power here."

Oswaldo Martinez, news director of the local Radio Progreso, said of the efforts to dislodge the workers: "It's a way of saying that they are still a state within a state and that Honduras, unfortunately, is still a banana republic."

The dispute began in July 1994 when families on the Tacamiche plantation in La Lima and on three others received letters saying the company had designated the land for "closing or final abandonment" because it was no longer fertile.

Many of the families had lived there since the 1920s, 10 years before Honduras granted United Fruit title to more than 3,000 acres for \$1, and they were frightened at the order to leave.

Residents claim they asked about acquiring the

land so that they could farm it themselves. Company officials say no such proposal was made and say they offered to relocate peasants to comparable land.

In February, troops, police and Chiquita work crews evicted 123 families in Tacamiche, uprooting their crops, and razing their cabins and three churches.

The Commission for the Defence of Human Rights in Honduras and the Roman Catholic Church denounced the raid as a blatant violation of Honduran law.

Officials at Chiquita's Cincinnati headquarters maintain the action was legal and justified. "The company feels it acted honourably... but we were met with nothing but resistance from the very start," said spokesman Joseph Egan. — New York Times.

It is clear that to be bearded has strong cultural associations with slovenliness, laziness and youthful rebellion. Like smoking pot, growing a beard is something that most students try once.

Mark Lawson

Page 6

News in brief

Spanish police hold 'three bombers'

SPANISH police arrested three members of the Basque separatist organisation ETA yesterday who they say were planning to consolidate the group's summer bombing campaign with an attack in the north-western region of Galicia.

The three, Aitor Fresnedo, Carlos Emilio Cristóbal Martínez and María Aranzazu Garballo, made up one of ETA's most experienced units, responsible for several bombings and assassinations.

They were rounded up in an early morning raid in the town of Pontevedra and were almost certainly preparing an attack to coincide with the festival of Santiago, patron saint of Spain, celebrated today.

"It would have been the pièce de résistance to the recent [bombing] campaign," said the Spanish interior minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja.

Yesterday's arrest follows a French police operation on Tuesday in which one of ETA's top leaders and five members were rounded up near Pau and in Paris. — *Adela Gooch, Madrid.*

'British spy wrote thrillers'

A RUSSIAN facing trial for spying for Britain was named by a Russian newspaper on Wednesday as a 28-year-old diplomat, part-time writer of espionage thrillers and son of a former deputy foreign minister.

The Argumenty i Fakty weekly said Platon Obukhov, who triggered a spy scandal earlier this year after being accused of passing information to British intelligence, wrote popular espionage and crime thrillers on the side.

The newspaper said Mr Obukhov was a second secretary in the foreign ministry's prestigious North America department. "He dealt with touchy, delicate questions such as disarmament," a spokesman for the British embassy in Moscow declined comment, saying only: "We regard the whole incident as closed."

In the fit-for-bit expulsion row which erupted in May, Britain expelled four Russian diplomats in response to Moscow's decision to throw out the same number of British embassy employees.

Argumenty i Fakty said Obukhov's father Alexei had been a deputy to the former Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze. — *Reuter, Moscow.*

Arrest for London blasts

AN ISRAELI court ordered a woman to be held for 10 days yesterday on suspicion of being involved in two 1994 bombings against Jewish targets in London, security sources said.

Israel Radio described the woman as an Israeli-Arab aged 30. Channel Two television said she held a French passport and was arrested on arrival in Israel from Europe.

Security sources said the Shin Bet secret service was conducting the investigation. The court banned publication of the woman's name.

Israel blamed Islamic militants for a car bomb which exploded outside the Israeli embassy in London in July 1994, wounding 14 people. Twelve hours later a second car bomb went off outside the north London offices of a Jewish fund-raising organisation wounding five people.

British newspapers said at the time that a Palestinian widow seeking revenge for the killing of her husband and son planted at least one of the bombs. — *Reuter, Jerusalem.*

Old flames rekindled

AN ABANDONED Italian vented his anger by setting fire to the island beauty spots where he courted his wife, newspapers said yesterday.

Pio Lorenzo Vitello, aged 32, was arrested on suspicion of arson this week on the Mediterranean island of Ponza, where fires destroyed 500 acres of brushland earlier this month.

Newspapers said Mr Vitello's romance had blossomed in the places where the fires were set — but his wife left him three months ago.

"Seeing those places where he had spent the happiest moments of his life with her made him lose his head," the Rome newspaper Il Messaggero quoted an investigator as saying. — *Reuter, Rome.*

Convict outsmarts judges

AN ISRAELI convict took revenge on his judges from his jail cell — by telephone.

Police said yesterday that Oren Avraham, aged 22, jailed for three years on fraud charges, was being investigated on suspicion of making nuisance calls from Ayalon prison.

He would call police from the jail pretending to be one of them to get them to give him secret computer data on the judges, the newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth reported.

It said he had pizza sent to the judges on their own credit cards. He charged some of the calls he placed on the phone card of one judge.

With the computer information he had acquired, Avraham would call a judge saying: "Tell me, your honour, did you know your daughter's licence was taken away for speeding?"

The newspaper said that he even ordered air tickets and then charged them to a senior official in the prime minister's office. — *Reuter, Jerusalem.*

Internet surfs into dictionary

CHINA has revamped its Modern Chinese Dictionary for the first time since its conception in 1956 to introduce contemporary phrases and excise revolutionary dogma, the chief editor said yesterday.

The new edition, launched in Beijing, has been expanded to include words unknown when Chairman Mao Zedong's government first commissioned the dictionary but commonplace after the reforms of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, ranging from "facsimile" to "credit card" and "karaoke". Other fashionable imported terms include "MTV" and "Internet". — *Reuter, Beijing.*

Special Offer. Save 10% now.

Vehicle rescue from just **£26.50***

JOIN TODAY CALL FREE **0800 000 111**

FREE INFORMATION PACK

0800 000 111

GREEN FLAG National Breakdown

EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR OF THE ENGLAND FOOTBALL TEAM

Post today No stamp needed

TO: GREEN FLAG National Breakdown, FREEPOST, Levens, West Yorkshire LS99 2GF. Please send me the INFORMATION PACK.

NAME (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

HOME TEL

ADDRESS

COUNTY POST CODE REF: C4466

*Plus a once only service fee of £9.95 (inc VAT) if you join by direct debit. Cash registered before 31/12/97 are subject to additional fee of £11.50. £26.50 includes a 10% saving on the usual rate.

Handwritten text: 0800 000 111

No concessions as third prison protester dies

Turkey puts hunger strikers on notice

Chris Nuttall in Ankara

A THIRD prisoner died yesterday in the two-month hunger strike in Turkey's jails. The justice minister, Devlet Kizilirmaci, after an emergency visit to an Istanbul prison, called for an end to the strike, but offered no concessions.

"We will remain patient for some time, meaning we will not launch an operation," he told a press conference after a four-hour meeting with the Istanbul governor, police chief and prison directors. "However, this issue cannot occupy Turkey's agenda much longer."

The protest has become the severest test of Turkey's first Islamist-led government. Three prisoners have died since Sunday in Istanbul jails in the campaign for improved conditions, and many others are reported to be close to death, several having lapsed into comas.

Their lawyers say they could die at any moment. Mr Kizilirmaci visited the Umraniyeh and Bayrampasa prisons in Istanbul yesterday to hold talks on resolving the crisis.

The previous day he told parliament that the two jails were no longer under state control.

"The situation is so bad that prison officials cannot enter Bayrampasa at all," he said. "It is being managed by the 850-900 inmates there."

The authorities are struggling to contain civil disorder outside the prisons. Fifty people were arrested in Istanbul on Tuesday after a

Strife carried to Germany

GERMAN police are blaming supporters of the hunger strike by left-wing prisoners in Turkey for a wave of attacks on Turkish businesses in Germany, writes Denis Staunton in Berlin.

Shops, offices and mosques throughout Germany have been attacked during the past week. A large warehouse for a Turkish-owned furniture company in Stuttgart was burnt down early yesterday.

An Islamic cultural centre in Pforzheim and a Turkish social club near Ludwigsburg were also attacked.

Twenty Turks of a "solidarity committee" in support of the hunger strikers occupied a Frankfurt office of the Social Democrats yesterday. They said the party's silence on the events in Turkey meant it must share the blame for the hunger strike.

mock funeral for one of the victims led to the police being stoned and attempts to erect barricades and set fire to buses.

Yesterday 30 demonstrators were arrested outside Bayrampasa prison, there was a peaceful protest outside the justice ministry in Ankara, and 350 people staged a sit-down demonstration at Buca prison in Izmir, another jail where the government says it has lost control.

Two Turkish writers, Yasar Kemal and Orhan Pamuk,

and a musician, Zulfu Livaneli, issued a statement yesterday saying the prisoners were fasting for basic human rights not, as the government had claimed, for political demands.

"Our prisons are worse than hell," it read. "The hunger strike is the last resort of those who have lost all hope."

Mr Kemal accused the justice minister of beginning a holy war for the Welfare Party in the prisons. "But we will resist it," he said.

The government has been taken aback by the situation in the prisons. Mr Kizilirmaci told parliament that the strict regulations introduced by the previous coalition in May, which sparked the hunger strike, had been necessary.

He said some prisons had been turned into training centres for leftwing and Kurdish militants.

Under the new regulations, the government transferred some of the 9,000 inmates charged under anti-terrorism laws to remote jails to try to stop the practice, made possible by a ward system which groups dozens of prisoners together.

But Mr Kizilirmaci said the ring-leaders then organised the hunger strike, involving 2,547 of the prisoners, using their own faxes and mobile phones.

He added that the relaxation of the regulations he ordered to perform fellatio on another inmate before biting off his testicles.

Halid Mujkanovic told the war crimes tribunal: "He got up, and his mouth was full of it. I don't know what, and he was covered with blood and oil."

The defendant, Dusko Tadic, is accused of taking part in this and other executions that day.

Rarely at these hearings have two central themes of the war been so starkly and horribly revealed: the twisted recreational aspect of the carnage and its macabre intimacy.

Mr Mujkanovic said that the crowd of Serbian guards who ordered and oversaw this barbarity "looked as though they were attending a sports



A soldier surveys the carnage caused by a bomb on a commuter train in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo yesterday. Up to 70 people are feared dead and more than 400 injured in the blast, which government ministers are blaming on the separatist Tamil Tiger rebels. The bomb went off at a railway station in the suburbs. PHOTOGRAPH: DEXTER CRUEZ

Scores feared dead in blast

Prithi Kodagoda in Colombo

UP TO 70 people were killed and more than 450 injured when a bomb exploded in a packed commuter train in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo yesterday evening, the health minister, A. H. M. Fowzie, said.

"There are at least 67 dead. Altogether more than 450 people have been injured. Fifty to 60 are in bad shape with head injuries and the like," he said.

He said 267 people were being treated at Colombo's main general hospital and 200 at a government hospital near the blast site, a railway station in the suburb of Dehiwala.

The industrial development minister, C. V. Gooneratne, said separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas were responsible for the attack.

The latest violence came as government troops recaptured the strategic army camp of Mullativu, in the north-east, from Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Officials in Trincomalee, the naval base city in the east, said troops were searching the camp for possible booby-traps planted by guerrillas who left the camp after seven days of intense, bloody fighting.

"The troops are now within the perimeters of the camp," an official said. "It is stinking with corpses."

Earlier the Tamil Tigers said they had taken complete control of the camp, a claim the army denied.

Police said they had detained two men after the blast in Colombo, which happened at about 6pm local time, but their identities were unknown.

They said two crowded carriages were wrecked, indicating that there may have been two bombs.

Security officials said they had recovered the identity cards of army personnel from the wreckage. — Reuter.

A Sri Lanka woman aged 31, living in the Swiss town of Rapperswil, was slightly injured by a bomb that exploded when she opened her letter box, police said yesterday.

China keeps nuclear test ban on hold

Joe McDonald in Jakarta

CHINA withheld its endorsement yesterday from proposals agreed by the United States and Russia to break the deadlock in the negotiations for a global ban on nuclear tests, but said that talks might produce an acceptable pact by September.

The accord reached by the US and Russia on Tuesday increased pressure on China to give ground on clauses dealing with enforcement of the ban, and other issues. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty negotiations, which missed a June 28 deadline, are to resume in Geneva on Monday.

The Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, told the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, at a meeting in Jakarta that Beijing was ready to work closely with Washington to resolve the remaining issues, a US official said.

Mr Qian said afterwards: "It is our hope that we can reach an agreement as soon as possible, so that the CREAT treaty can be ready for signatures in September when the General Assembly meets."

A key Chinese concern has been on-site inspections of suspected treaty violators. Washington and Moscow agreed that an inspection could be authorised by a bare majority of the 61 treaty countries. China wants a two-thirds majority, making inspections more difficult to obtain.

It also wants to limit the technical means countries may use to implicate violators, fearing that its lack of spy satellites and other sophisticated detection equipment will put it at a disadvantage.

Another problem is India, which wants a promise to disarm from the declared nuclear powers, including China. — AP.

Megawati grows into power player

Harsh repression is making a star of Sukarno's daughter, reports Nick Cumming-Bruce

THE night guard at the gate of the Indonesian Democratic Party headquarters said: "Come inside please, it's an emergency." Behind him sat a motley band in red party T-shirts, armed with staves and ready for a fight.

"They had heard that groups of soldiers were preparing to occupy the premises. We told the military if they come we will burn the place," a senior party member said later.

In the event, the night guard passed without incident. But tension is still running high.

Less than a year before parliamentary elections, the PDI's Jakarta headquarters is the focal point of a struggle by its populist leader Megawati Sukarnoputri to survive government and military efforts to undermine her.

Megawati, the daughter of independent Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, won the PDI's chairmanship in 1993 for a five-year term, only to lose it in June when a party faction, acting at the behest of the army, ousted her and installed a rival PDI leader, Suryadi, in her place.

A street rally by several thousand of her supporters in Jakarta soon after turned violent when they were charged by cane-wielding troops, leaving scores injured and possibly one man dead.

But to the embarrassment of the military, Megawati's supporters still hold the party headquarters.

President Suharto's New Order has used such tactics for 30 years to control this sprawling archipelago of

13,000 islands and 180 million people while he concentrated on economic development.

Faced with a party leader who might have won the election in 1996, and seemed to be appealing to the young — there will be 20 million first time voters in 1997 — Suharto did not hesitate to use them again.

But many Indonesians see the action as a blunder that demonstrates how the regime is losing touch with political reality.

"These politics of very subtle manipulation are no longer tolerated by society," warns a political scientist, Dewi Fortuna Anwar.

The effect has been to generate a groundswell of support for a politician of hitherto meagre political muscle. The PDI occupies a mere 56 per cent of the seats in parliament, but it is expected to win 400 that are elected — the rest are appointed by Suharto — and not all PDI MPs are Megawati supporters.

Suharto's agents have created what for the past 30 years he has successfully and ruthlessly used to his advantage: a real opposition leader. Anwar comments: "People are sympathetic because of the way she has been treated. She has become a rallying point for all the people with a grievance."

At 49, Megawati lacks a track record of leadership and speaks with none of the fiery oratory of her charismatic father.

Yet her appearance at PDI headquarters, dressed in red and blue, wearing sunglasses, electrifies waiting supporters who surge forward beating the air with clenched fists, chanting: "Victory for Megawati!"

Megawati owes her popularity less to her own talents than to being a Sukarno, Anwar suggests. The romantic appeal of the name is strong and she attracts support from a broad spectrum of nationalists, intellectuals and blue-collar workers.

Her simple style and patent sincerity strikes a chord with Indonesians disgusted by corruption and the fortunes amassed by the Suharto family.

Whether she can harness this dissent to sustain a long-term campaign is less clear. "There are so many factions, she is not in control," observes Juwono Sudarsono, another political scientist. "The army's strategy is to wear down her support."

Megawati is seeking to keep the battle of the streets and in the courts. She is challenging the legality of the congress that ousted her and, until the courts rule otherwise, claims she remains legally the party leader.

Court proceedings could drag on for a year or two. In the meantime, the authorities have ruled her ineligible to contest next year's elections. Without an election campaign to keep her in the public eye, there is a danger that enthusiasm for her may flag.

Survivor tells of Omarska 'blood sports'

Ed Vulliamy in The Hague

THE account of a survivor of the Omarska concentration camp yesterday revealed new depths of brutality at the core of Bosnia's war. He described seeing a prisoner — watched by whooping guards, as though at a sports match — forced to perform fellatio on another inmate before biting off his testicles.

Halid Mujkanovic told the war crimes tribunal: "He got up, and his mouth was full of it. I don't know what, and he was covered with blood and oil."

The defendant, Dusko Tadic, is accused of taking part in this and other executions that day.

Rarely at these hearings have two central themes of the war been so starkly and horribly revealed: the twisted recreational aspect of the carnage and its macabre intimacy.

Mr Mujkanovic said that the crowd of Serbian guards who ordered and oversaw this barbarity "looked as though they were attending a sports

match, supporting a team". They fired excited shots into the air as the testicles were bitten off and later, while killing another man, played a song on the radio entitled Let Me Live as a soundtrack.

The victims who died in this frenzy of violence, of which the castration was only a part, had known each other, and Mr Tadic, since childhood.

Mr Tadic, who is charged with multiple war crimes, was identified by Mr Mujkanovic as among the group overseeing the mutilation and murders. But he did not say that Mr Tadic personally ordered the castration.

Mr Mujkanovic was screened off in the witness box and his face blanked out on closed circuit television monitors.

He said he had been one of the first prisoners to arrive at Omarska. After being interrogated, he was given a space on top of a locker in an empty corridor on the ground floor of a building. Soon his area was crowded, as were adjoining rooms and even stairs leading to the upper floor.

Mr Mujkanovic was repeatedly beaten by a guard who demanded money to keep him alive. He persuaded other prisoners to give him a watch and silver chain for the guard.

On June 18 1992 Mr Mujkanovic heard guards call out the names of several friends, including Emir Karabasic and Jasko Hrnica. (Mr Karabasic was Mr Tadic's best friend.)

The guards then demanded two "volunteers" from Mr Mujkanovic's locker area, saying that if they were not forthcoming someone would be killed. Two came forward — known as "G" and "H" in the trial. Other inmates ran upstairs, anxious to avoid a part in what was to follow. Mr Mujkanovic, however, crouched behind an open door across his part of the corridor.

He covered his face with his hands, he said, but twice looked at the scene on the other side of the door. He heard someone shout: "I am a pig. I like pigs."

He added: "I saw 'G' coming out of the corridor. He was all covered in oil... I saw — I can't quite say who it was — maybe Emir Karabasic or someone else, and 'H' was holding him down by the arms. Then 'G' had to bow down in his crotch and it was ordered to him that he must bite off his genitals."

"When I looked a second time, there was screaming. 'G' got up, with his mouth full of I don't know what and covered with blood and oil. There was a group of soldiers, and someone was shooting into the air."

"A little time passed. One of the soldiers brought the person [who had been castrated] a drink... it was still alive and it was given to this person to eat."

Mr Mujkanovic said that the group then turned on his friend Jasko Hrnica. "A soldier beat him with a metal iron bar. He fell, he showed no sign of life. Music was playing. Let Me Live was the title of the song... I ran upstairs to the toilet to throw up, even though I had not eaten anything."

Mr Mujkanovic said the man castrated and murdered is named as Fikret Harabasic. Witness 'H' testified in closed session yesterday.

Peace force 'needed to halt new Bosnia war'

Reuter in Washington

WAR is likely to return to Bosnia if there is no international force after December, when Nato peacekeepers plan to leave, the chief of United States military intelligence said yesterday.

He said Bosnian factions had not renounced their original goals, and the conditions for civil order had not yet been established.

He told the Senate intelligence committee that an effective international force in Bosnia was unlikely unless US ground troops were included. But he added that it was possible European allies could form a force of their own.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

His idea of public works is 19th century, the Greens leader, Carlo Ripa di Meana, said earlier this week. "His imagination is filled with vi-

ducts and tunnels — all that recent thinking has put under suspicion."

The carrying turned to protest when Mr Di Pietro decided to activate a long-standing plan to double the number of lanes on the section of the Autostrada del Sole between Bologna and Florence. The project, which includes about 18 miles of tunnel, would cost an estimated 5,500 billion lire (\$2.4 billion).

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way on to a new road through Umbria, and much more is due to be carried by a new high-speed train link passing through Florence.

The Greens hold the environment portfolio in the cabinet and 14 seats in each of the two houses. In the lower house, Prof Prodi depends on Communist Refoundation, which is not in the government, for a four-seat edge over the other parties.

But the Greens argue that the scheme is unnecessary. Some traffic is already finding its way

One up to the protesters

But the World Service is not out of the wood yet

THE FOREIGN OFFICE and the BBC have wisely bowed to public pressure; yesterday they set up a working group to examine the impact of John Birt's controversial plans to integrate the English language side of the World Service with mainstream BBC departments. This is a constructive move — particularly if independent bodies like the National Audit Office are involved — but it doesn't allay fears about the BBC's ultimate ambitions.

Two things need to be done. First, as Robin Cook said yesterday, the reorganisation should be frozen while the inquiry is taking place; second, the group needs a strong independent chairman. At the moment it consists of Christopher Battiscombe, a Foreign Office civil servant and Sam Younger, managing director of the World Service. Mr Younger brings a wealth of experience to the task but since John Birt is his boss and since he has accepted the Birt reforms in principle (after first contemplating resignation) he can hardly be expected to be as objective as an independent chairman. Mr Battiscombe for his part is there to carry out the Foreign Office's brief.

Part of this is to convey the FO's displeasure at not being consulted in advance over the BBC's radical plans even though the FO — on behalf of the taxpayer — funds the World Service to the tune of £155 million a year. That's fine. The BBC deserves all it will get for its arrogance in ignoring its own paymaster. But that is only part of the story. The FO is also the villain of the piece in that, as its contribution to Treasury reductions in its own budget, it has cut the parliamentary grant to the World Service from £160 million in 1995/96 to only £147.5 million in 1997/98. This was done without analysis about the usefulness of the Service compared with other FO activities which could have been cut instead.

Although the FO is under the impression as a result of yesterday's meeting that no irreversible reforms will be made while the working group is deliberating, the BBC's interpretation is rather different. It seems to think it can push on with its ill-considered reforms while the monitoring process is taking place. The danger is that a succession of seemingly small changes will irreversibly alter the character of the World Service even while the group is in the throes of talking.

Next week's report of the foreign affairs select committee is expected to urge ministers not to accept BBC assurances that their reforms will benefit the World Service in view of their poor track record on consultation so far. The committee is also likely to suggest that Mr Birt reports regularly to the select committee. That's alright as long as he changes his errant ways and doesn't proceed unrepentantly with the changes in order to justify them afterwards to the committee.

The BBC's governors are due to meet today. Normally such meetings are low-key events with the governors rubber-stamping what the BBC executives have decided. This time it ought to be different. The BBC is proposing something which could irreversibly change the culture of the World Service which is almost universally acknowledged as the world leader in its field. We don't have many such activities and we should be careful not to ruin a winning formula. The governors may be inclined to back the BBC's judgment simply because they are unsure about the consequences. That would be a mistake. They should note the unprecedented opposition — including yesterday's letter from 144 distinguished people — and give the World Service the benefit of any doubts. At the very least they should freeze the reforms until the implications have been fully discussed.

Strike no medals for Mr Major

Britain is too much of an also-ran for sports facilities

HAS any athlete ever had a faster reply? Early yesterday Paul Palmer, the hero of the hour as Britain's first 1996 Olympics medal winner, was brutally frank about sports facilities in Britain: "We need backing from the Government if we are to win more medals and especially gold ones. But they only think about swimming and gymnastics every four years when the Olympics come round." Just hours later, the Prime Minister spoke before a gathering of sports people in the Downing Street garden to celebrate the first anniversary of his green paper on sport. The press packs were jammed with statistics recording progress on last year's 38 "action points": more coaching, more PE, more facilities, more out-of-school activities, new schools specialising in sports, a doubling of university sports scholarships, plus a spanking new £100 million national academy of sport.

Eat your words, Palmer? Clearly the Prime Minister, who praised our new silver medal winner, thought so. In a braver piece of self and party promotion he declared: "Last year's sport policy statement contained the most important set of proposals ever published to develop, encourage, and promote sport in our country." Up to a point, Lord Copper. John Major is a genuine sports fan. He's right to be dismayed by the current level of sports activities. He deserves support for his campaign to widen opportunities and raise standards. Sport does promote, as this week's television coverage from At-

lanta dramatically demonstrates, concentration, commitment, self-discipline, team spirit and fun. Unlike previous Major initiatives — come lines, motorway lavatories — progress has been achieved since his highly publicised personal pledge. But it is not carrying to suggest the Prime Minister's claim, like some energetic Olympic gymnasts, has "over-rotated".

Progress has been achieved but the reason why sport was in such a dire state was a direct responsibility of the Government. It was not just the Opposition which pointed this out yesterday but a former Conservative education minister, Sir Rhodes Boyson, who with refreshing honesty noted the disastrous withdrawal of teachers from voluntary activities in 1985 following a new tighter teachers' contract. He could have noted a 70 per cent drop (in just three years in the 1980s) of school sports fixtures. And he might have added the sale of 5,000 school playing fields since 1979 by cash-strapped education authorities. Sceptics will note that the new sport initiatives are almost entirely being funded by the Lottery. The National Lottery Sports Fund received £400 million in its first year. Far from being embarrassed by breaking the ministerial promise not to use the Lottery for essential public services, the Prime Minister claimed it as a virtue yesterday. Paul Palmer was right: Mr Major will not create "a ladder of sporting opportunity" without Treasury, as well as Lottery, funds.

A discord in the Borough

Time to back Britten by public subscription

WHAT WISE old St Matthew said about prophets being without honour in their own country appears to have been triumphantly vindicated in Aldeburgh this week, where the town council has voted not to erect a statue of Benjamin Britten in the churchyard in which he is buried. He's already got a plaque and a stained glass window and that, the councillors apparently think, is enough.

The motives for this decision take some disentangling. "It is not as if Benjamin Britten was born and bred in Aldeburgh" says the town clerk coldly. "He was born in Lowestoft." But that was surely the fault of his parents, for which his long residence in the town, his part in creating its festival, and the fact that this modest town on the Suffolk seaboard is now famous all over the world, might seem to be suitable reparation. Then, some in Conservative Suffolk may be troubled by his

homosexuality, his leftist friends, or his flight to the USA at the start of the war. Or perhaps they simply feel the great composer, with his outbursts of petulance, his fickle affections, his cold treatment of collaborators, was not a very nice chap. Maybe so. But if only very nice people were thought deserving of statues, there would be empty plinths all over London today.

But what seems to have counted most was the need for prudent housekeeping. They've just spent £13,000 on a new play area which in the town clerk's opinion is of far greater practical benefit than any statue or bust. The answer here is that Britten's statue ought to be funded, as so many statues of Victorian civic dignitaries were, by public subscription. Let them put out the collecting boxes at every exit at Snape. Local opposition can be expected to crumble if the cost of the operation can be passed to somebody else.

Sport for all



Letters to the Editor

Enemy within Spain

JOHN Hooper (Copy cat terrorists, July 22) is not altogether accurate in distinguishing the Basque conflict from the Northern Irish as lacking a sectarian element. As he points out, ETA's attacks on some Basque (rather than non-Basque) targets is a recent development — a response to Herri Batasuna's abject failure to expand or even maintain their support within the Basque country — and negatively confirms that in general ETA's enemy has been defined as "Spanish".

Hooper doesn't mention the most striking difference, however. There is no coherent argument whatsoever confirming that the Basque country is systematically denied democratic rights by the post-Franco Spanish state. Not only does Euzkadi have a high degree of autonomy, but along with Catalunya it is the richest region in Spain — not exactly a traditional indicator of oppression. Unlike

the Basque country, Northern Ireland is an intrinsically sectarian creation, and northern nationalists are still systematically discriminated against as even official social statistics confirm.

It is all the more sad and ironic that while ETA's reactionary struggle escalates militarily, the Irish peace process has been corralled. Irish republicanism is a pan-nationalist — and therefore sectarian — dead-end. The similarity between Basque nationalism and Irish republicanism is a regrettable recent phenomenon.

AM saddened to see in your front page article (ETA escalates resort bombings, July 22), that you refer to the bombers as Basques in general and not as ETA in particular. ETA is more symbolic of the Basque people than

the IRA speaks for all Irish Catholics. Mike Pritchard, Verdague 1 Callis 12, 1, 08003 Barcelona, Catalunya, Spain.

THE reaction to the bomb explosions in Spain is interesting. Quite properly the mood of the Spanish authorities and British holidaymakers was that the bombing would not affect tourism unduly as most people are unwilling to buy the threat of terrorism. Contrast that to the reaction of tourist chiefs and government in Northern Ireland. The tourists were leaving in droves they said, every statement was more negative than the last.

One would be forgiven for believing that the scaremongers were working for the Spanish tourist board. William Montgomery, Bangor Branch, Democratic Unionist Party, 31 Dundela Avenue, Belfast BT4 3BU.

Shock horror! Julie's back

WHY have you resurrected Julie Burchill? What she has to say tells us nothing about the state of Britain or the world (Return of the Mouth, G2, July 23). It only tells us that she continues to have vast, hateful hang-ups. Her only consistent position is that she is anti-woolly, middle class liberals — a puerile stunt sally if ever there was one. The end result is that she hits out at everything in sight, contradicting herself time and time again. She says that "at least John Prescott's married to a good Methodist woman". Methodist is good because Cherie Blair is Catholic. However in the next column Blair is bad because his message is "go back to hearth and home and Methodist Sunday school".

She says "I always had an eye for a pretty girl". Shock horror, how amazing, really cool. Until the next column when suddenly, "I don't find women attractive at all, frankly". She's for working class authoritarian values but would

restore the death penalty for all murders except those of policemen. Careful Julie — the working class wouldn't like that. Your trendy lefty side is showing. But lastly, how can we take someone seriously who claims to be a Thatcherite and a Soviet style communist? Her poor father must wince. Arthur Gould Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU.

ICAN only conclude that whoever called Julie Burchill "the most brilliant woman in Britain needs to get out more. Simon Beer, 151a Packington Street, Islington, London N1 8RA.

JULIE Burchill must be one of the few people left alive who is capable of worsening the reputation of communism. Peter Smees, 37 Hanover Road, Norwich NR2 2HD.



Dancing all the way to the gold

IS it not ironic that the Olympic Games, which opened with "doves of peace" made of paper, should award the first medals to shooting events? R W Cotton, 22 Sabine House, Shirley Road, Abbots Langley, Herts WD5 0NF.

ANDREW Moncur (Last Tango in Atlanta, July 22) asks who cares whether ballroom dancing is in the Olympics or not. Frankly, a lot more people than give a damn about dressage, pole vault or synchronised swimming.

Is there any question that years of training, talent, skillful coaching, peak physical fitness and a determination bordering on obsession, describe any top competitor, including dance? Your writer may be correct to ask whether the majority would know the difference between a tango and a salsa nova but does it matter? Sometimes no one can see who won a race without a slow-motion replay. Joe Public does not understand the

finer points of a gymnastic display, and he probably cannot differentiate between an ice skater's triple lutz and triple salschow. This does not prevent viewers watching in their millions, and feeling proud when a medal is won. Could it be that Britain is good at ballroom dancing and has a realistic chance of gold? V E R Anderson, 268 Norwood Road, London SE24 9AG.

THE decision by Muhammad Ali, once "the greatest" athlete in the world and now affected by a form of parkinsonism, to light the Olympic flame should be applauded. 120,000 people in the UK have Parkinson's disease, a progressive movement disorder. The fact that Ali stood before a worldwide television audience can only have helped raised awareness of the condition. Harry Brookring, Chief Executive, Parkinson's Disease Society, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0RA.

Importance of Treasury kids

THE Treasury study into the privatisation of the Welfare State was dismissed by Kenneth Clarke as the work of "kids in the office". Yet within a few days Peter Lilley announces the privatisation of child benefit. Are these "kids" the offspring of Mystic Meg or the playmates of the "Chicago Boys" — those advocates of policies which have destroyed welfare states across the globe?

The "kids in the office" are the same grades as those who, after almost 20 years of involvement in flexible working hours schemes, are now being told by the DPEE management that they will be excluded from them. Presumably because of the importance of their work. Hardly "kids stuff" — though backward looking in the department responsible for equal opportunity policies including the reconciliation of professional and family life.

Peter Lamb, Vice President, The Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union, 5 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0NS.

SO Kenneth Clarke has got "kids" working in the Treasury. I have written to him recommending my friend's nephew be shortlisted. He is nearly two, cannot write but can do dictation, and can just about say "privatise the welfare state". He sounds like perfect Treasury material. Clive Elliott, 15 Delaware Avenue, Abington WV7 3BW.

Pain barrier to understanding

ELIZABETH Peacock and Ann Furedi (Women, G2, July 23) ignore important evidence. The first is the nearly universal experience of being born by vaginal delivery. For any sentient human being, having your head squeezed to the point of deformity would be highly unpleasant, even without the additional discomfort of the things that obstetricians often have to do to assist the birth process. Yet nobody remembers being born.

Secondly the many millions of male infants who are circumcised shortly after birth without anaesthesia, don't remember it either. (I speak from personal experience.) Under anaesthesia, many patients visibly respond to incision but provided they don't remember being operated on, they are usually satisfied even if the anaesthetic was technically incompetent.

Pain that cannot be remembered doesn't worry people. Even if the anti-abortionists don't accept my argument, the most they could logically request is that all abortions should be carried out under general anaesthesia rather than local.

Colin Brewer, 254 Eccleston Street, Belgrave, London SW1W 9NP.

F Elizabeth Peacock were to hit her hand with a hammer

and scream, I would assume she was feeling pain. The same cannot be said of a foetus. Not because it is not biologically sophisticated, because it clearly is, but because it is not psychologically sophisticated. The "internal light" is not yet on, it is not aware of itself, its past, its present nor its potential future. It is naive as to all the cognitive, evaluative and emotional processes associated with pain. Ann Furedi was right to quote Fitzgerald that "true pain experience develops" postnatally, along with memory, anxiety and other brain functions", a conception that is in keeping with the IASP (International Association for the Study of Pain) definition of pain as a subjective phenomenon developed "through experiences related to injury in early life." This view reflects the understanding of the vast majority of pain researchers — of which I am one. Professor Hull may prefer to assume that fetuses feel pain but he then speaks as a religious person not as a scientist. He should not pretend that such a view comes from our lack of understanding about pain. (Dr) Stuart W G Derbyshire, Rheumatic Diseases Centre, Clinical Sciences Building, Hope Hospital, Eccles Old Road, Salford M6 9FD.

A Country Diary

DURHAM. Two years ago the final crop of barley was taken from these fields. They were earmarked for building until financial cuts intervened and the land earned an unexpected reprieve. The fields' first year of freedom was the year of the poppies. They appeared in thousands amongst the last traces of the barley, especially where soil had been disturbed. Amongst them were the tenacious agricultural weeds — wild oats, field pansy, mayweeds, hawkweeds, ragwort — whose seeds had lain dormant in the soil, undefeated by the sprayer. But this year they are playing a supporting role. The parachute regiment of the plant world has taken over. 1996 is the year of the thistles. On the dry hill top, flat rosettes of spear thistle that dug in last autumn have sent up dense ranks of armoured stems topped with woolly purple flowers, contrasting with ragwort's massed mop-heads of gold stars. In a dip in the ground where the soil is permanently moist, a strongpoint of

creeping thistle has established itself in a waving sea of grasses and is extending its perimeter. Amongst so many individual plants of each species there are intriguing variations. Some of the spear thistles are fasciated, with several stems welded together through some accident of development, and crowned with a cockscomb of coalesced blooms. One ragwort plant is much paler than the rest with crisped leaves and cream flowers. A crop of pollen and nectar from these cereals replaced years of cereal monoculture and has led to a population explosion of butterflies and bumblebees. Small tortoiseshells and meadow browns have a tenacious feeding station, while the thistle leaves are a perfect egg-laying site for the migrant painted ladies that arrived so early this year. And as the first thistles run to seed, the goldfinches, yellowhammers and linnets are arriving to share in the windfall.

PHIL GATES.

July 24 1996

Diary Dan Atkinson

HEARTY eaters of a traditional stamp, enraged by the noisy ban on sheep's brains, ought to book in for a week or two at University Hospital of Wales, where they can tuck in to the sort of non-PC scotch last available some time during the reign of Henry VIII, including meat and edible offal of cattle, pigs, goats, horses and asses... Mmm. These and other delicacies are specified in the hospital's invitation in the European Union's public-contracts journal for firms to tender as fresh-meat suppliers. Goat meat features also on the menu, as do meat and edible offal of poultry, fresh or chilled... Stunned after discovering contract spec, Cardiff West MP Rhodri Morgan declared: "I didn't realise the ESE crisis was all that serious."

MEANWHILE, parents of school-age children in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Somerset were intrigued when the publishers of Our School Magazine—a periodical distributed through primary schools and full of jolly about what to do in the holidays and so forth—made urgent contact and requested immediate destruction of the issue circulated a fortnight ago. Close study of Page 23 would have explained the panic. "Guzzle's birthday surprise; a story for our younger readers" takes up most of the space and tells a charming tale of a guinea-pig. The first of two end-pieces, a nine-line love poem, seems a little out of place, but so be it. The final item is, ah, problematic: "Mike, I feel utterly miserable. I think you don't come over any more and only come over when C is working and you want a shag." Yes, Mike's behaviour the previous Saturday "makes me feel like a pornographic magazine, only not so sexy". The conclusion of this 16-line rant: "If that's all I am to you these days, I think you should leave me alone, because it's just not fair. You don't know how horrible it feels, especially when it's you." We assume the printing system had a brainstorm and published accidentally an internal message; at any rate, a "revised" edition is now in circulation with a dreary advert for the Bristol Evening Post in lieu of the story for help. PS: Mike ought to stick with this girl; she may talk dirty, but at least all the commas and apostrophes are in the correct places.

WOMEN in Parliament want many things, but there are one or two gallant old conventions that help them through the day. One is that no male MP would dream of exercising his technical right to jump the Commons and queue in the small hall if the only non-Member ahead of him were a single woman. No MP, that is, other than Labour's Jack Cunningham, at time of going to press the head of his bloated team of National Heritage spokes-entities. By the middle of last week, the strain of campaigning for the shadow cabinet had clearly begun to take its toll on the MP for Copeland. He emerged from the members' entrance at 12.30am, accompanied by Mrs C, and spotting a lady-toller in the press lobby stepping out to take a taxi—blocked her way and declared, in a tone of voice that betrayed the grueling nature of the shadow-cabinet trial: "You're not an MP. I'm an MP." Mrs Cunningham looked away at this point, no doubt to admire the majesty of Parliament against the night sky. As the great doctor's commandments cab rumbled off, the duty bobby agreed that rules were rules, but expressed a certain surprise. New Labour: No Manners.

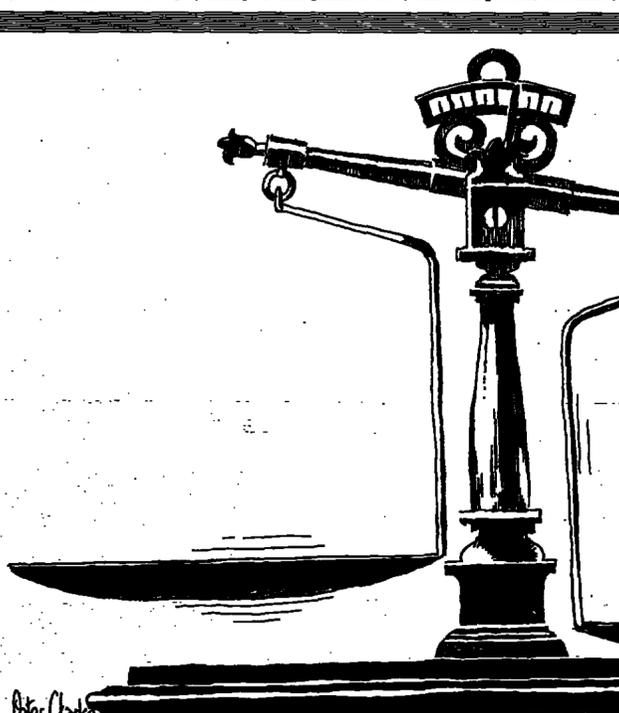
FINALLY, a report from elsewhere in the taxi trade. Steve "I'm free" Norris yesterday celebrated his voluntary return to the backbenches by launching with Sainsbury's ex-Treasury minister John Mapps (of leaked-memo fame) at the Caprice in St James's. When he emerged it was raining. The ministerial car? Gone, of course. SN cab for years; it ignored him. Well, he was minister for London transport.



Battle of snakes and ladders

Commentary Hugo Young

THIS is a happy day for John Major. No more questions, no more squirming answers, no parliamentary party in convulse assembled, no treacherous bastards ceaselessly manipulating it. Politics does not go to sleep, but its capacity to wreck the leader disappears for three months. This is the moment Major has been waiting for. The contrast with Tony Blair is, as he might say, very considerable. At the end of term, it's as obvious as it is perverse which man is more at ease with his predicament. A month ago, in one of the realms of possibility, Mr Major was yet again finished. He counted the days until Parliament rose. I heard ministers checking off the crises they had to survive before reaching the green uplands from which the Commons are for ever absent. Once there, grazing undisturbed, they would be safe from demolition. Some even spoke of regaining control of the high ground from which, with a Budget and Queen's Speech to come, they could dictate the course of politics up to the election. This was always fanciful, but at a time when most cows had taken over Tory politics, it was an irresistible dream of paradise. When small mercies are the only ones available, survival is satisfaction enough for Mr Major's hardened ego. Those who meet him regularly speak of his resilience, which is plain for all to see, but also of his equanimity, for which there is no explanation in most rule-books of political psychology. The people who were, until recently, most enraged by this are those who have done most to break it: the Euro-phobes terrified of losing their seats and thus shedding every particle of influence they ever had on this earth. Who will give the smallest damn what Tony Marlow thinks is the time of day, when the electors of Northampton have had the sense to throw him out? Major's serenity looked like the recipe for doing nothing, either about Europe or about tax. But time has dampened the public ardour even of William Cash. The leader is the only leader they have, and now pretty much on his own terms. What is the source of his composure? No doubt he thinks, in part of him, that victory is still possible. Ob-



Balance of power

Who will get priority under New Labour — an unemployed man whose wife is sick, or a new millionaire? Roy Hattersley asks what the party believes in

AT last, I have found a reason to admire David Willetts. For months I have thought of him as Macaulay thought of Chatterton — "a young man whose genius is more diseased than observed". Then, on the radio last Sunday, he was asked to justify a nurse earning so little when a pop-star earned so much. His response was a passable précis of Hayek's famous dictum on wages in the free market. "The manner in which benefits and burdens are apportioned... would in many instances be regarded as very unjust if it were the deliberate result of allocation... But to demand justice from such a process is absurd." That notion is obviously both intellectually and morally flawed: it implies that injustices cannot be corrected. But nevertheless I rejoiced to hear it articulated. Mr Willetts believes in the sovereignty of the market. So he applied that first principle to wages as he applies it to everything else. Here was a politician with a consistent, if palpably inadequate, ideological view. Gordon Brown, on the same programme, occupied the diametrically opposite position. Everything that he proposed — a little more social justice, a moderate level of incentives and the avoidance of unnecessary regulation — sounded right and reasonable. But in

encompassing of everything within the project of New Labour. Up close, instead, what's more apparent is the testiness of leadership denied. This is the natural evolution of a serious man. Real leadership is neither a pastime nor a joyful business. The passing of the great smile shows us that Blair knows what future life is going to be about. This is encouraging. It reminds us how vastly greater are the stakes for Blair than they are for Major, and how angst-ridden the coming months will be. Also, the warts are coming out, further proof of the onset of reality. Chief among them, as perceived through the polls, are a certain arrogance and a certain pique, neither of which the British like. Blair has become almost terminally impatient. Two years is a long time for anyone to lead a project whose purpose, still unfulfilled, is the quest for power. He is

How vastly greater are the stakes for Blair than for Major, how angst-ridden the coming months will be

doing it, moreover, at the head of a body, the Parliamentary Labour Party, which is indispensable to his existence and yet, of all Labour's institutions, the least amenable to his project. Mr Blair does not much like the PLP but, however many appeals are made to the party membership at large, the PLP continues to have power to thwart the leader and confuse the image of Labour he is trying daily to put across. If it is his belief that if the public



Balance of power

more likely to ripen and find expression, if social inequalities are, as far as practicable, diminished? The hope is to diminish rather than completely to eliminate social inequalities, and even then the aspiration is qualified by the phrase "as far as practicable". Equality of outcome is hardly an extreme doctrine. Accepting it would, however, provide Labour with the prospect of ideological consistency and intellectual coherence. The party would be elevated on to the high ground of politics where decisions are not always based on opinion surveys, and would avoid the embarrassing confusion which party spokesmen now exhibit when they speak of equality of opportunity. For unless Willetts is right, and it amounts to no more than a free-for-all in which the tough and the talented rise to the top, equality of opportunity has to be built on the foundation of equality of outcome. Tawney wrote, and every subsequent social survey has confirmed, that "it is only the presence of a large degree of practical equality which can diffuse the general opportunities to rise". A visible example of that truth walked into my constituency two weeks ago. It took the form of an unemployed man of 45 with a sick wife and two children. The whole family existed on £25 a month and lived in a house which possessed none of the basic amenities. Increased equality of opportunity will pass him by. He will not benefit from a new training initiative or find a job through the computerised vacancy-notification system. His family needs money to alleviate its suffering. And the children need better clothes, better food, better medical care and the bonus of pre-school education to make equality of opportunity for them anything except a sick joke. In a decent society there is "an equal start as well as an open road". That is Tawney again and will, therefore, be dismissed on the wilder shores of New Labour as old-fashioned. But the battle about what the party should stand for ought to be fought over logic and morality, not the date on which theories were first published. After all, the Willetts of this world place absolute faith in a theory which they imagine Adam Smith set out in 1776 — though, in truth, he was not the advocate of the unfettered market which they suppose him to be. Belief in that theory saw Thatcherite Tories through years of difficulty which might have turned into despair had they not retained faith in the ideas which guided the government. Labour, facing the difficulties which might have turned into despair had they not retained faith in the ideas which guided the government, Labour should judge every policy proposal against a simple criterion. Would the outcome increase or reduce equality? Sometimes the government would be forced to choose the option which divided rather than united society. But by constantly asking the question, it would maintain its commitment to the basic object of a more equal society. There is no reason why that commitment should be fanatically discharged. A month or so ago, Tony Blair was reported as saying that he wanted to build a dynamic

Notice anything different about me today?



Mark Lawson

RECENTLY, during a discussion on one of those personalities who are not completely the same as they used to be, Pamela Anderson, perhaps, or Michael Jackson — I was asked about my views on cosmetic surgery. I came out strongly against it, which was perhaps dishonest, as I was already planning a significant alteration to my own face. Two weeks ago, after 16 years as a stranger to the razor, I removed my beard. Beards — at least since Gillette became a household name — have always been a prickly subject. A man who has one is widely assumed to be a tramp or a liberal (male readers of this newspaper are, in the right-wing parody of a beard, generally said to be non-shavers) or to have something to hide: whether because he is a criminal seeking to outwit the Photofit or because he dislikes some aspect of himself. Margaret Thatcher was known to refuse profferment to those with face-fur. Earlier this year, the whisky bristled again when a firm of image consultants released polling showing that voters distrusted candidates whose chins they couldn't see. Not least because of a clean-shaven antonym "clean-shaven", it is clear that to be bearded has strong cultural associations with slovenliness, laziness and youthful rebellion. Like smoking pot, growing a beard is something that most students try once. (There exist pictures of both Bill Clinton and John Selwyn Gummer, for example, with tufted chins.) Only in the Greek Orthodox Church do beards seem to speak of authority. Although, encouragingly, Richard Branson — winner of newspaper polls to discover schoolchildren's role models and the people's candidates for the first president of a British republic — does not seem to have been held back by his attitude to shaving, even though he boldly attempts the goatee, which is surely the trickiest of options, being literally neither one thing nor the other. My own chin history is that I originally stopped shaving because I tended to be taken as much younger than I was, which could be a social and professional disadvantage. This year, now tending to be taken as much older than I am, and spotting the first white bristles, van-

ity prompted a chin rethink. The 30s is just about young enough for a beard to have been a phase rather than — as for David Bellamy, say, or Archbishop Makarios — a trademark. There was also the matter of a lightning director at the BBC who had been complaining for some time that beards made his job problematic, tending to wrap an unwelcome cravat of shadow around the presenter's neck. One Saturday morning in Boots, I bought an electric razor. My beard had always been a slightly-cropped one — the beard-trimmer I used for grooming if permitted settings from one to six (roughly, George Michael to David Bellamy) and I had used number two — so it seemed reasonable to remove it without recourse to foam and blade. The operation took 10 minutes. It did not feel like the psychological amputation I had feared, and revealed no serious defects. A clean-shaven man, weathered a tiny scar from adult-onset chicken pox above my lip. Looking in the mirror was like looking at an old photograph, now slightly blurred. The main strangeness was a two-tone face, weathered at the top, white where the sun-shield had protected it. When I shook out the razor-head, there was a handful of dust with the colour of pepper and the consistency of instant coffee. I briefly toyed with keeping it in a box, as some people do their extracted kidney or gall stones — but then swirled it down the wash-basin. THERE were two strange things about my new identity as a clean-shaven man. The first was a new range of sensations. My exposed chin felt terribly cold. Reading broadsheet newspapers, the breeze against my newly-naked jowls from the turning pages was nearly intolerable. It was two days before this odd thermometer at the bottom of my face switched off. The second oddity was how little my transformation was noticed. I'll never trust again those thriller plots in which men escape identification by the addition or subtraction of a beard. Mr Swift agitated schoolchildren's role models and the people's candidates for the first president of a British republic — does not seem to have been held back by his attitude to shaving, even though he boldly attempts the goatee, which is surely the trickiest of options, being literally neither one thing nor the other. My own chin history is that I originally stopped shaving because I tended to be taken as much younger than I was, which could be a social and professional disadvantage. This year, now tending to be taken as much older than I am, and spotting the first white bristles, van-

Advertisement for 'Food for Thought' by Vernon Coleman. Text: "Between a third and a half of all cancers are caused by eating the wrong types of food". Includes a testimonial from Dr Vernon Coleman and contact information for the publisher, The European Medical Journal.

1550

Tomorrow: Yorkshire Water faces shareholders

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Allied drives £200m Carlsberg bargain

Lisa Buckingham

ALLIED Domecq is expected to sell its 50 per cent share of the Carlsberg-Tetley brewing operation for up to £200 million when the deal is concluded next week. The sale to brewer Bass was expected to be finalised before the weekend but technical hitches have delayed the announcement. Shareholders are likely to be satisfied if Allied secures a price of anything better than £150 million, even though the company's stake in the ailing brewery

business is in its books at substantially more. The City has been talking down expectations of the deal and traders have suggested Allied would be willing to extricate itself at almost any price. It is understood, however, that Allied, under its new chairman Sir Christopher Hogg, has driven a harder bargain than anticipated and a statement on terms is expected next week. Not only will the company be able to boast a higher sale price than forecast by City analysts but it is likely to withdraw without becoming embroiled in

an Office of Fair Trading inquiry into the potentially dominant share of the market which Bass will command as a result. Bass must convince the competition authorities to give a green light to a takeover that will give it about 40 per cent of the UK brewing business, catapulting the company back into the country's number one slot which was lost to Scottish & Newcastle after its acquisition of Courage. If Bass succeeds in buying a share of Carlsberg-Tetley, it will bring Britain into line with most overseas countries where the

brewing industry is dominated by two leading players. Only Whitbread, a small third in the game with about 12 per cent of the market, will be left in the big league. The UK competition authorities appear convinced that the domestic beer market is now controlled by the retailers — supermarkets, pub groups and off licences — and is sympathetic towards the argument for contraction to cut costs among ale producers. Credence is also given to the claim that 3 per cent of the market now comes from Europe duty free.

Allied will retain some historic brands in the Carlsberg-Tetley stable, such as Benskins, which could in the future be used to brand fashionable pub outlets. Allied's existing pub business is tied into the Carlsberg-Tetley beer operation in what is regarded as an expensive supply agreement which expires next year. The deal with Bass is thought to take account of this, which analysts reckon is worth about £50 million, raising the putative sale price to more than £200 million. If Allied extricates itself

from the three-year-old Carlsberg-Tetley morass with anything like its head held high, the company's standing in the City is bound to rise in anticipation of more deals from Sir Christopher. The company is thought to be examining its portfolio of spirits — in order to slim down the number of top brands to between 12 and 15. These can then be supported with increased marketing spend — something Allied has lacked in recent years compared with competitors such as Grand-Met's International Distillers.

Notebook

No substitute for sound judgment



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE Bank of England cannot be accused of responding frivolously to the Barings debacle. Almost a year to the day after the Board of Banking Supervision exposed the profound weaknesses in the existing regulatory structures, it has moved to introduce critical reforms.

The most important is the move to what the Bank calls a "more systematic model of risk assessment", under which it will seek to gain a better understanding of the risk associated with the various business of banks under its charge. This is an attempt to find a path between the extremes of a US-style inspection-based system — which was not durable enough to prevent Daiwa's rogue trader in New York — and the low-regulation full-disclosure approach of New Zealand.

The Bank's run of its new model in two institutions, one major bank and one smaller player, demonstrated some advantages to detailed risk assessment. For instance it can significantly increase knowledge of how much of a bank's capital can be exposed safely to overseas risk — such as Barings' dealings in Singapore. Presumably, a risk assessment of HSBC might, for example, find an unwise concentration of Pacific lending in the property sector.

However, there will still be significant gaps in the Bank's coverage. Because of the home country supervision rules, encapsulated in EU directives, German banks can carry out activities in London that are alien in Frankfurt. This is a grey area, still to be addressed satisfactorily. The Bank is also seeking to address a deficit in its regulatory culture. This will be done by providing better analytical tools to regulators and bringing more grey panthers (part time banking experts) into Threadneedle Street — although the Board of Banking Supervision was meant to do that anyway.

However, good benchmarking and quality standards, there can be no substitute, in the end, for judgment and the ability to use intelligence wisely. If these skills had been better honed in the past, then there may have been no need to bring in Arthur Andersen in the first place.

Grow carefully

THE buoyant growth in retail sales in June is the latest in a series of indicators suggesting that the economy is taking off. Almost every authoritative survey, including those from the British Chambers of Commerce, 3is and the Retail Consor-

tium, and the CBI's on industrial production, are now pointing in the same direction — upwards. This ought to be a source of joy for the Government, which has had to wait until the fifth year of recovery for the feel-good factor. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, was almost certainly over-anxious when he asserted his right to cut base rates by a quarter point to 5.75 per cent.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, now has more than enough ammunition to fire at Mr Clarke when they meet next week. Aside from the statistical evidence of the 1.3 per cent rise in retail sales in June, which brings the year-on-year growth up to 3.5 per cent from 2.4 per cent, the Governor also has a great deal of anecdotal material to rely on.

Looking across the City of London he cannot miss the reappearance of the gilt crane. At recent auctions the picture from the large retailing groups has been universally more optimistic. House prices in certain regions have picked up, helped, in part, by the relaxation of lending criteria by some building societies. And so on.

The delayed summer weather no doubt played a part in boosting clothing and shoe sales. But the real driving force behind this expansion is the rise in disposable income, and windfall gains from a variety of sources ranging from Texas to building society conversions and utility rebates... not to mention the April tax cut.

On historical experience, this in many respects is the most dangerous phase of the British cycle. If Mr George and company can manage to keep it under control, then lingering questions about the Bank's credibility could be put to rest.

Pie in the sky

IT IS because Rupert Murdoch has been so adept at exploiting regulatory loopholes that he has been able to win such a dominant media position in the UK and other markets. By developing the Astra satellite as a non-domestic venture, for instance, he was able to skip around cross-ownership limits in Britain.

But Mr Murdoch's enterprises are still getting an easy ride from the regulators. The latest to fall under the spell is the OPT director-general, John Bridgeman, who has accepted the argument that it was only as a result of a high-risk investment that BSkyB was able to improve consumer choice. Maybe. But BSkyB was only able to reach this position by ruthlessly knocking the other potential satellite operator out of the sky, leaving its satellite beyond the reach of UK authorities, deploying the full range of Murdoch's media interests in promotion and depriving large parts of the population of live coverage of great sporting events.

Anyone who believes that BSkyB will give the weaker cable operators a fair chance is living in cloud cuckoo land.

Market makers celebrate victory over stamp duty

Ian King

CITY market makers yesterday welcomed proposals from Chancellor Kenneth Clarke which will ensure that they continue to enjoy relief from stamp duty on share transactions. They had feared losing the benefit, which has existed since the 1920s, after the Chancellor called for a review of the practice as part of a wider-ranging study into increasing liquidity in the London markets.

In fact, Mr Clarke, on the advice of the Securities and Investments Board, the City's leading watchdog, announced plans to widen relief to include other market "intermediaries" such as regional brokers. The new rules will not apply to small investors who will continue to pay stamp

duty on share transactions, despite Prime Minister John Major's pledge to eventually abolish the tax. The Stock Exchange has also agreed to SIB proposals aimed at a greater level of transparency in market trading. It will require all so-called "protected trades" — which allowed market makers to delay notification for 90 minutes, thereby allowing them to conceal their positions — to be made public at once. It means that the proportion of share transactions which become public knowledge immediately after they have taken place will increase from 75 per cent to more than 85 per cent.

Publishing the SIB's report to the Chancellor, chairman Sir Andrew Large said the proposals would have significant effects, and would increase the amount of liquidity in London's markets.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS			
Australia 1.9050	France 7.56	Italy 2.300	Singapore 2.15
Austria 15.74	Germany 2.2400	Malta 0.5385	South Africa 6.65
Belgium 46.07	Greece 359.00	Netherlands 2.5170	Spain 189.50
Canada 2.0785	Hong Kong 11.71	New Zealand 2.17	Sweden 10.6275
Cyprus 0.6915	India 55.21	Portugal 231.50	Switzerland 1.9150
Denmark 6.6775	Ireland 0.9345	Saudi Arabia 5.79	USA 1.5180
Finland 5.96	Israel 4.91		

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel)

Bank spends £8m to avoid new Barings

Mark Milner

THE Bank of England yesterday unveiled an £8 million-a-year package of measures intended to boost its supervision and surveillance operations in the wake of the Barings investment bank collapse. The Bank's deputy governor, Howard Davies, said he believed the reforms would make it "more likely" that the Bank would be able to detect problems such as the one that brought down Barings. But it did not mean that bank failures were a thing of the past.

No system could prevent bank failures, he said. "Banks are in the business of taking risks. If they do not, there would be no point in having them. The aim is to create a banking supervision system which, as far as possible, reduces the risk of the failure of individual institutions." The Bank's proposals are based on a report from consultants Arthur Andersen that looked at how the Bank conducts its supervisory and surveillance functions. The report, which followed a nine-month study, concluded that, while the Bank should keep its existing system where supervisors exercise informed judgement within improved standards and guidelines, a series of reforms should be implemented. These included more resources, which could mean an additional 100 new posts to add to the existing 335 in the division including up to 45 more supervisors; better

training; recruitment of people with specialist skills; more effective use of information technology and tighter links between the aims of supervision and the process by which it was carried out.

A key part of the reform programme will be a risk assessment model, now being tested, which will allow supervisors to draw up what Mr Davies described as a "risk map" of individual institutions. Michael Foot, the Bank's director of supervision, said that under the new regime Bank officials would carry out more "on site" visits. The aim would not be to be more "inquisitorial" but to ensure that they addressed real substance.

MAIN POINTS

- Retention of the Bank's judgmental, rather than rule-based, approach to supervision
- More staff — up to 100 — and more equipment at a total cost of up to £8 million a year
- A more focused structure for the Bank's supervision and surveillance activities
- Introduction of a "risk assessment model" to identify areas of banks' operations where risks are greatest
- Greater emphasis on training plus recruitment of an advisory panel of recently retired senior bankers — the "grey panthers"
- Overhaul of financial returns required from banks

Yesterday the Bank said it would also set up a "quality assurance function", in line with recommendations in a Board of Banking Supervision report drawn up after the Barings affair.

Mr Davies estimated that the reforms could add between 20 and 25 per cent to the cost of the Bank's supervisory activities, now £35 million a year.

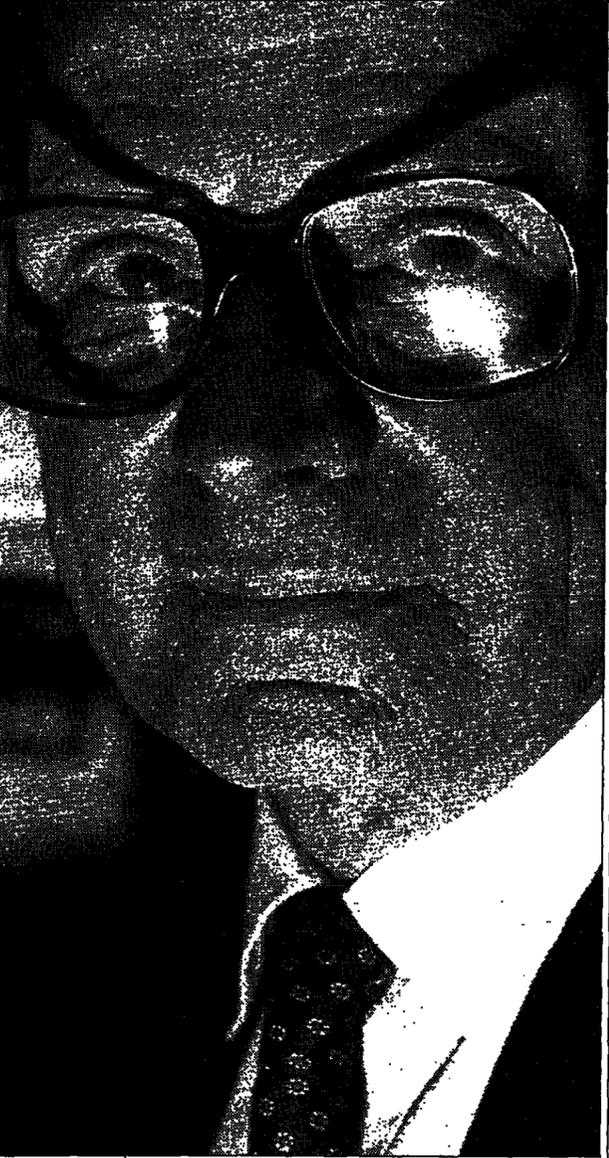
One problem has been in retaining and attracting people with the skills needed by the supervisory division. Yesterday Mr Davies said that the Bank would be flexible in rewarding existing staff or attracting outside experts, but that across-the-board pay increases were "not realistic in the public sector".

A spokesman for the Treasury said: "The Bank believes it can afford the increase [in supervisory costs] from within existing resources over the next two years because of savings elsewhere. The [cost] implications for later years will be addressed nearer the time."

Labour's City spokesman, Alistair Darling, gave the reform package a guarded welcome, while warning that there was a limit to what the Bank of England, as the regulator, could do.

"What we need to see from the Bank of England is a change of culture away from the traditional old boy network where they rely on the fact that they know these chaps and they assumed they knew what they were doing, to a more proactive role," he told BBC Radio 4's The World at One.

Ex-power chief to take over as chairman



New face... Robert Malpas, a non-executive director of Eurotunnel, and the first chairman of the electricity generator, PowerGen, is taking over from Sir Alastair

Sir Alastair sees light at the end of the tunnel

Keith Harpur
Transport Editor

SO, we say farewell to Sir Alastair Morton. The man whose single-minded determination and abrasive approach has been the driving force behind the building of the Channel Tunnel is resigning as chairman of Eurotunnel.

But his departure, though not immediate, is imminent. He said yesterday that he still had one thing left to do — the conclusion of a deal with the banks on how the company can be relieved of its \$3 billion debt burden.

This prevents Eurotunnel from making a profit and giving its shareholders a welcome break from the financial purgatory they have had to face since the tunnel was built.

Sir Alastair said he intended handing over to Robert Malpas, a non-executive director of Eurotunnel, and the first chairman of the electricity generator, PowerGen.

Finding a successor was difficult. Nobody would take the job. Which is why the company has had to fall back on a 70-year-old, semi-retired business executive.

In a characteristically optimistic manner, Sir Alastair suggested that a solution to the debt problem was on the table. He stressed that the deal was "visible", and that the 30 banks around the world, who have poured money into the project, now "have to make up their minds".

He made it clear that it was only a matter of weeks before a deal was agreed. The likely outcome is that the banks will swap their loans for shares in the company and then sell it off again.

Sir Alastair has no plans to tackle anything else, apart from taking a long holiday and staying on the board of Lucas. He has always insisted he would get out when the tunnel was built and operating.

Last Friday, Eurotunnel's rail shuttle service carried

9,800 cars and coaches in one day — three times what it achieved on its first day. It has 43 per of the cross-channel traffic and business is mounting.

Sir Alastair can look back with some pride at his achievement, apart from the little matter of the burdensome debt loans. He said: "Despite the price war forced on us by the ferry operators, Eurotunnel is now ahead of breakeven after all operating costs including depreciation, but before bank interest."

Sir Alastair, the son of a Scots engineer, was born in Johannesburg, which he left to become an Oxford scholar. His previous jobs included banking, engineering and oil before he took on the job of masterminding the Channel Tunnel enterprise.

He unashamedly locked horns with governments, railway companies and manufacturers over what he saw as the slow delivery of rolling stock, excessive bureaucracy on safety regulations and lack of adequate transport links.

Three the Old Lady missed

THE Bank of England is hanging on to its role as banking regulator, arguing not only that it is up to the job, but also that the role has synergies with its overall responsibilities for Britain's financial system, writes Mark Milner.

But three scandals in a decade have put the Bank's supervisory role under the spotlight. The first, in 1964, was the collapse of Johnson Matthey Bankers with £250 million of bad debts — a large slice of which had gone to a very small number of borrowers. The affair sparked a flurry of legal actions.

It is said to have strained relations between the Bank and the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, and between the Old Lady and Britain's big commercial banks which were "asked" to contribute to a Bank-organised whip-round for JMB.

The second scandal, in 1981, was the closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International after what the regulator described as a "massive and complex fraud".

The supervisory issues were complicated: BCCI was based in Luxembourg but did much of its business out of London. But the

Bank came under heavy fire for, variously, acting too early, too late or for the wrong reasons.

The trio of scandals was completed in 1994 with the collapse of Barings, one of the oldest names in British merchant banking, with about £360 million worth of losses on derivatives trading run up in Singapore by one of its traders, Nick Leeson.

Once again the Bank's regulatory arm came under fire for failing to act on warnings that Barings' Singapore operation was taking on dangerously high exposures through its derivative dealings.

Suter succumbs to bid

Paul Murphy

SUTER, the mini-conglomerate run by David Abel, is expected to confirm this morning that it has succumbed to a £260 million takeover offer from Ascot Holdings, the former Control Securities group once run by disgraced financier Nazim Virani.

Ascot, now a cash rich "shell" company run by former Williams Holdings director Howard Dyer, is thought to be offering a package of cash and shares valuing Suter cash at £200 apiece. As the two companies conceded that they were in talks yesterday, shares in Suter jumped 27p to

197p, valuing Mr Abel's 3 per cent stake at almost £8 million.

Mr Dyer revamped Ascot, which as Control Securities was drawn into the Bank of Credit and Commerce International collapse four years ago. It has been slowly disposing of a ragbag of hotels and pubs since then, and carried out a £175 million restructuring 18 months ago. The last sizeable asset, a block of 250 pubs, was sold off to a management group in February for £30 million, leaving the company with net cash of around £20 million.

Mr Dyer is expected to head the newly merged company with Mr Abel, who was cleared of insider dealing

charges two years ago, eventually moving off to pursue other interests.

Becoming a main board director of British Leyland by the age of 32, Mr Abel combined his job with heavy speculation in the stock market, and made a personal fortune in the 1970s.

Suter began as a manufacturer of salon hairdryers and expanded during the 1980s. Its interests, ranging from fridges to chemicals, were built up during the 1960s.

Just three months ago, Mr Abel announced that Suter would no longer make investments in other publicly quoted companies, opting to concentrate on its core businesses instead.

Police hold numbers'

to thrillers

in blasts

dead

to judge

to doctors

Offer NOW from just 0 ALL FREE LOW PRICE 0 111

All clear for Hills and Swinburn

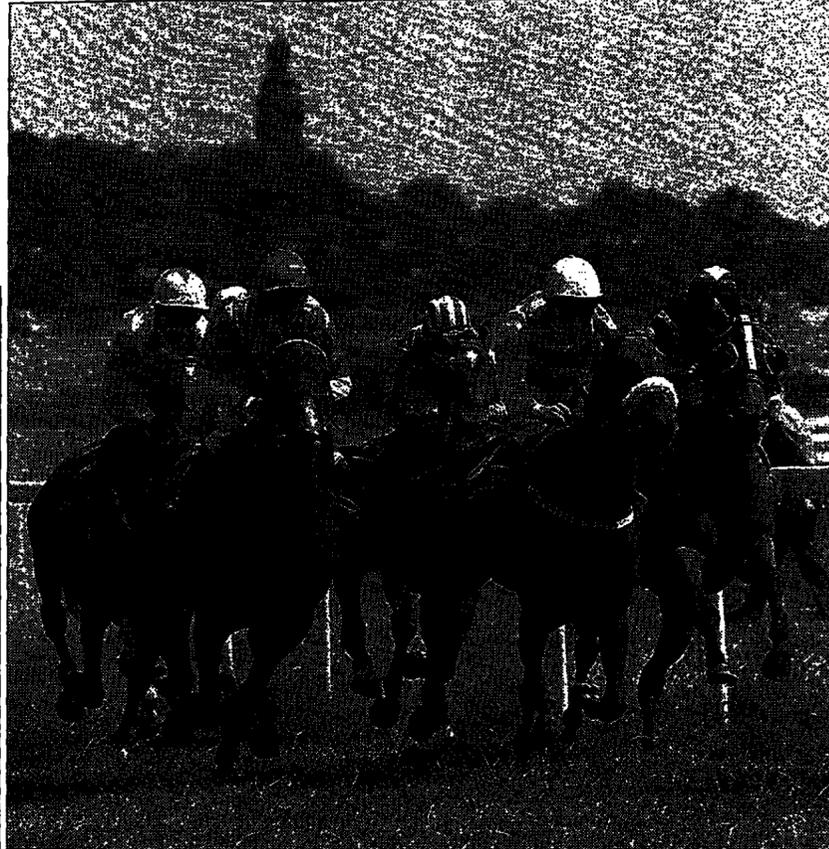
Graham Pock

WALTER SWINBURN was granted a licence to ride from August 11 by the Jockey Club yesterday, and the Disciplinary Committee reduced the suspension...

will require private insurance. Under the official scheme, jockeys are covered for six months from the date on which their injuries were incurred.

After a 40-minute hearing, Swinburn and his father gave a brief press conference at which the jockey read out a prepared statement. Swinburn was visibly nervous.

Under Jockey Club rules, a two-day suspension offers much more flexibility and Hills will miss riding tomorrow and Monday.



Leader of the pack... Great Bear (noseband) leads in yesterday's Be Hopeful Handicap at Bath. PHOTO: HUMBERTO BENEVENTO

the horse were unbalanced." Michael Roberts, who was standing by to take over on Pentire, will now switch to Newcastle to ride Branson Abby, who will attempt to equal the post-war record of 22 wins by a mare.

"The off-course punter benefits from an increase in the number of afternoon fixtures," said Tristram Ricketts, chief executive of the BHB. "Racing remains very reliant on the punters' contribution via the levy and we will continue to work with the betting industry."

Sandown with form guide

- 2.15 High Dancer, 2.25 Yalta, 2.35 Yashmak, 4.00 Village King (oh), 4.35 Magic Mail, 5.10 Oamaru Standard

- 2.15 KATERELLA AUCTION STAKES 2YO 16yo CL24.4. 1. NOD DANCER (5) 2. NOD DANCER (5) 3. NOD DANCER (5) 4. NOD DANCER (5) 5. NOD DANCER (5)

- 2.15 BAYBERRY AUCTION STAKES 16yo CL25.05. 1. BAYBERRY (5) 2. BAYBERRY (5) 3. BAYBERRY (5) 4. BAYBERRY (5) 5. BAYBERRY (5)

- 2.15 BAYBERRY AUCTION STAKES 16yo CL25.05. 1. BAYBERRY (5) 2. BAYBERRY (5) 3. BAYBERRY (5) 4. BAYBERRY (5) 5. BAYBERRY (5)

- 2.15 BAYBERRY AUCTION STAKES 16yo CL25.05. 1. BAYBERRY (5) 2. BAYBERRY (5) 3. BAYBERRY (5) 4. BAYBERRY (5) 5. BAYBERRY (5)

- 2.15 BAYBERRY AUCTION STAKES 16yo CL25.05. 1. BAYBERRY (5) 2. BAYBERRY (5) 3. BAYBERRY (5) 4. BAYBERRY (5) 5. BAYBERRY (5)

Brighton runners and riders

- 2.00 Triple Team, 2.35 Lieder's Joy, 2.51 He's Got Wings, 4.44 Phoenix, 4.50 Pearl Dream, 4.55 Crystal Heights

- 2.00 BIP WOODMAN AUCTION STAKES 2YO 16yo CL25.05. 1. BIP WOODMAN (5) 2. BIP WOODMAN (5) 3. BIP WOODMAN (5) 4. BIP WOODMAN (5) 5. BIP WOODMAN (5)

- 2.00 BIP WOODMAN AUCTION STAKES 2YO 16yo CL25.05. 1. BIP WOODMAN (5) 2. BIP WOODMAN (5) 3. BIP WOODMAN (5) 4. BIP WOODMAN (5) 5. BIP WOODMAN (5)

- 2.00 BIP WOODMAN AUCTION STAKES 2YO 16yo CL25.05. 1. BIP WOODMAN (5) 2. BIP WOODMAN (5) 3. BIP WOODMAN (5) 4. BIP WOODMAN (5) 5. BIP WOODMAN (5)

- 2.00 BIP WOODMAN AUCTION STAKES 2YO 16yo CL25.05. 1. BIP WOODMAN (5) 2. BIP WOODMAN (5) 3. BIP WOODMAN (5) 4. BIP WOODMAN (5) 5. BIP WOODMAN (5)

Chepstow evening card

- 6.30 General Moulder, 6.55 Seattle Star, 7.25 Papering, 7.50 Shallow Head, 8.25 Shadow Lead, 8.55 King Parrot

- 6.30 GENERAL MOULDER (10) 1. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 2. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 3. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 4. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 5. GENERAL MOULDER (10)

- 6.30 GENERAL MOULDER (10) 1. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 2. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 3. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 4. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 5. GENERAL MOULDER (10)

- 6.30 GENERAL MOULDER (10) 1. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 2. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 3. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 4. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 5. GENERAL MOULDER (10)

- 6.30 GENERAL MOULDER (10) 1. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 2. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 3. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 4. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 5. GENERAL MOULDER (10)

- 6.30 GENERAL MOULDER (10) 1. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 2. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 3. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 4. GENERAL MOULDER (10) 5. GENERAL MOULDER (10)

Catterick tonight

- 6.40 Cornish Quest, 7.10 Theobald, 7.40 Heccece, 8.40 Bolin Stone, 9.10 Campagna

- 6.40 CORNISH QUEST (10) 1. CORNISH QUEST (10) 2. CORNISH QUEST (10) 3. CORNISH QUEST (10) 4. CORNISH QUEST (10) 5. CORNISH QUEST (10)

- 6.40 CORNISH QUEST (10) 1. CORNISH QUEST (10) 2. CORNISH QUEST (10) 3. CORNISH QUEST (10) 4. CORNISH QUEST (10) 5. CORNISH QUEST (10)

- 6.40 CORNISH QUEST (10) 1. CORNISH QUEST (10) 2. CORNISH QUEST (10) 3. CORNISH QUEST (10) 4. CORNISH QUEST (10) 5. CORNISH QUEST (10)

- 6.40 CORNISH QUEST (10) 1. CORNISH QUEST (10) 2. CORNISH QUEST (10) 3. CORNISH QUEST (10) 4. CORNISH QUEST (10) 5. CORNISH QUEST (10)

Rugby League 'Too expensive' Larder to leave Keighley

Paul Fitzpatrick

PHIL LARDER, the England and Great Britain coach, is to leave Keighley at the end of the season after two highly successful years in charge at Cougar Park. He claims that the club can no longer afford him.

"I have been told that the club cannot afford to renew my contract and I am not being offered a new deal," Larder said.

"It is a very sad way to end any spell with a club but clearly I have to look to the future. My time with the Cougars has been very rewarding and I will do everything in my power to ensure that we finish this season in the best possible shape."

This unexpected development follows quickly on the arrival of Carl Metcalfe, a wealthy businessman who bought the club last week with the promise that funds would be available to buy players and improve facilities.

Larder, one of the most thorough and knowledgeable of coaches, is unlikely to be out of work for long. The forthcoming vacancy at Bradford would suit him, although the Bulls may be tempted to look again to Australia for a replacement for Brian Smith.

"I am ambitious as a coach to work with the top players and it would be better for me as an international coach to be able to see the best players in the game on a regular basis," Larder said.

After two seasons at Widnes, Larder replaced Peter Roe at Cougar Park in May 1994 and in his first season took the side to the Second Division championship. But Keighley, to Larder's and the club's bitter disappointment, did not secure a place in Super League.

They finished runners-up to Salford in the Centenary Championship. They are chasing Salford again this season but have suffered horrendously with injuries and are currently fourth.

Last year Larder steered England to the World Cup final, where they were beaten by Australia, and he will be in charge of the Great Britain side to tour Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand at the end of the current campaign.

Greg McCallum, the controller of referees, is to submit a report to the game's chief executive Maurice Lindsay after his investigation into Saturday's heated Super League clash between Warrington and Bradford.

Two brawls, damage estimated at £200,000 to a pitch-side television camera and criticism of Warrington's coaching by Warrington's coach John Dorahy will feature in McCallum's report.

"Just one player has been referred to the disciplinary committee, Richard Healey of Warrington, but after further consideration of the match video-recording I will be making a report to the chief executive," said McCallum.

Wakefield rugby union club have denied that Jonathan Griffiths, their former England Under-21 flanker, has joined the Super League club Paris St Germain.

Paris St Germain, Wakefield's secretary, said there had been no contact with Paris. "Jonathan Griffiths is contracted to play for Wakefield," he added.

Results

Table with columns for race name, runner, and result. Includes results for Sandown, Brighton, and Catterick.

Large vertical advertisement for 'Rugby' and 'McGeechan' featuring a large 'M' and 'Huss force' text.

Small advertisement for 'RACELINE' with contact information and a phone number.

OLYMPIC GAMES



Obree and out... the pursuit is over for the Scot MICHAEL STEELE

Obree lost for power and glory

Cycling

Stephen Bierley

FOUR years ago on the outskirts of Barcelona, Britain's Chris Boardman, riding a bike as thin as an After Eight mint, triumphed in the men's individual pursuit. Yesterday was to have been the start of Graeme Obree's own golden pursuit but before midday at Stone Park his Olympic challenge was sadly over.

Obree had been one of Britain's chief hopes for an Olympic gold but a virus, contracted in June, took its toll. On Atlanta's outdoor track, so hot that the wooden boards seemed in danger of turning of tinder, he simply faded away.

He had desperately hoped to catch fire himself but was already partly demoralised before he set foot on the pedals. Few, least of all he, had expected this track to be so fast. But first France's Philippe Ermenegildo broke Boardman's Olympic record, set in Barcelona, and then Italy's Andre Collinelli smashed Obree's world record of 4:20.894 by more than a second. Collinelli, beaten by Obree for the world pursuit title in Bogota last year, was riding immediately before the Scot and his time drove deep into Obree's scared psyche.

"I was hoping for something to be there which just wasn't," said Obree afterwards. "I felt like a lamb going to the slaughter" — a vast lamb, as it proved. For the first seven laps he was on qualifying pace but thereafter his form sagged as the drive in his legs disappeared.

From the first round of this event the eight quickest go through to the quarter-finals. Obree was looking for around 4:27. His 4:34.297 left him stranded in 11th, almost four seconds short of qualification. But this was a shadow of the real Obree.

The virus had brought on respiratory problems which had eventually affected his whole body. He lost nearly four weeks' prime training during the summer and, although he claims to be completely well now, the residual effects of the virus were obvious. Blood tests at the weekend showed his white cell count well below normal.

"That loss of training was absolutely crucial," said Obree, who now plans to ride next week in the road time-trial with Boardman. He might be better advised to give it a miss.

His career has never run true and smooth. He set the world hour record three years ago, since beaten, on a bike that cost less than £100 and famously included parts from a washing machine. He also adopted a thoroughly unorthodox riding position and was disqualified from the 1994 world championships. Nobody, however, disputes the 30-year-old's talent; he has two world titles (1993 and 1995) to prove it.

Leaning on a non-racing bicycle but still wearing his clear plastic riding goggles, he was sanguine about yesterday's performance. "I suppose it was not unexpected. I had been four or so seconds down in my training anyway but had just hoped to do enough to qualify. It didn't happen."

Even the start had seen Obree less than his usual composed self. He had to wave away an NBC cameraman who was too close and prevented him seeing the countdown for the split start. He then wobbled at the first corner when his wheel kicked. "But these things didn't affect me at all," he said. "I just didn't have the basic speed."

Today Yvonne McGregor has the chance in the women's individual track pursuit to make up for the disappointment. Boardman's gold medal in Barcelona was Britain's first for cycling since 1920. We must hope not to wait as long again.



Going through the motions... Graeme Obree, having seen his world pursuit record taken, found his strength sapped by a virus and failed to reach the quarter-finals KEVIN LAMARQUE

Stubborn McGregor inspired by Burton's Personal Best

Cycling

William Fotheringham

THE late Beryl Burton, who dominated British women's cycling for a generation, had two great regrets. She never competed at the Olympics, as women's cycling events began only in 1984 after her best days were over, and she never took the coveted world hour track record despite two attempts.

The Burton traits, of stubborn determination allied to superlative skill against the watch, live on in her fellow Yorkshirewoman Yvonne McGregor. The 34-year-old already holds the world hour record, and she will have two good chances of gaining an Olympic medal, in the track pursuit — the event Burton made her own at world championship level for 15 years — and in the individual road time-trial, the discipline that Burton dominated for 30 years in Britain.

McGregor has never made a secret of the inspiration she gained when she read Burton's autobiography *Personal Best* shortly after taking to two wheels when an Achilles injury put paid to her fell-running and triathlon career.

After a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in Canada in 1994, she took the

hour record at the Manchester Velodrome last year. The unpaired hour — something of a British speciality in recent years thanks to Chris Boardman and Graeme Obree — is one of cycling's supreme tests of willpower and strength. In a velodrome there is no opportunity to relax for a second as there is in a road time-trial.

That McGregor's distance of 47.411 kilometres withstood an assault from France's Jeannie Longo last autumn is further testimony, and Longo, the world time-trial champion, could not look gold in last Sunday's road race, had the advantage of altitude when she attempted to beat McGregor's record, set at sea level.

As a member of the North

Wirral Velo-Kodak elite team set up by Boardman to bring along Olympic hopefuls after his Barcelona pursuit gold, McGregor follows a programme — based on British domestic time-trials and track events — which is similar to that followed by Boardman prior to his 1992 triumph. Indeed, her assault on Atlanta is being masterminded by Peter Keen, the Eastbourne sports scientist who was behind Boardman's Olympic title and his 1994 Tour de France prologue win.

Racing is not enough to prepare for Atlanta's heat and humidity so McGregor trained on a stationary bike in the bathroom with the central heating on and the shower running. Last autumn she and Board-

man could be seen on the track in Manchester being tested to breaking point.

Keen's and Boardman's expertise has failed to alter one imponderable factor: the ill-luck that has led to McGregor having four major accidents in the past three years, with a broken shoulder, collar-bone and cheekbone last year alone. She has learned to be wryly philosophical about the fact that if a black cat crosses the road it tends to run into her front wheel.

She took two national championships this year: the pursuit, with the fastest set of times ever by a woman, and the 25-mile time-trial. Last month's smashing of Burton's 25-mile road record, which had stood for 25 years and

was considered unbeatable, was literally that.

McGregor had to make the trip to London to be measured for her Olympic uniform, and decided to enter a race in Essex at the same time for some useful training. "I thought about Beryl while I was riding. Peter didn't want me to go fast, I could have gone half a minute faster if I had wanted to." That sounds arrogant, but is the same Keen-based physiological confidence displayed by Boardman.

It is also the same Yorkshire plain-speaking which was a much-loved side of Burton, who will doubtless be watching from on high with a smile on her face when her successor takes to the road in Atlanta.

Raggatt and Carr steal the early thunder for Britain

Sailing

Bob Fisher

A THUNDERSTORM scattered near Savannah first delayed most of the racing and then set severe technical problems with some massive wind shifts.

After two days ashore the 470 sailors finally began their 11-race series. The surprise for Britain was that it was Bethan Raggatt and Sue Carr

in the women's event who made a grander entrance than the highly fancied men, John Merricks and Ian Walker.

While the men were languishing in mid-fleet at half-way after an indifferent start the British women were lying second in their race to the UKraine pair.

Merricks and Walker did well to pull back through the fleet to 15th at the finish — and might have been somewhat surprised that the pair who had got there first were Jodi Calafat and Francisco Sanchez of Spain, the Olympic champions, whose performance of late has been anything but champion.

Raggatt and Carr prefer the fresher winds and, as those out on their course began to die, they were passed by the United States, Japan and the Olympic champions, Theresa Zabell of Spain. The Britons ended in fifth place.

Most of the early excitement came with the finish of the men's sailboards. Nikolaos Kakiamanakis of Greece, the series leader after two races, led almost all the way round but Aaron McIntosh of New Zealand had made up a lot of ground after being fifth at the first mark. McIntosh got ahead just before the final buoy and went on to take the winner's gun.

In the Sun class Colin Beahel of Australia posted his third successive victory.

The American Nick Adamson held his Laser after a collision in the class's second race when he tacked into the path of the Australian boat, which had right of way, rounding a mark. He has applied to use one of the stock spares.

Irish call for release of Smith's drug-test result

Swimming

David Hopps

IRELAND's team officials are pressing the Olympic authorities to release the result of a drug test on the gold medalist Michelle Smith to end continuing speculation over her remarkable performances in Atlanta.

Irish team officials said they wanted the result of the compulsory test, taken after her 400 metres individual medley win last Saturday. Smith followed her unexpected triumph with a 400m freestyle gold two days later.

Normally the International Olympic Committee would

not be required to inform countries of a negative test. Urine samples taken for drug analysis are only numbered, not named. Testers link up the sample with an athlete only if it is positive.

But Ireland's medical chief Joseph Cummins said: "We have asked them for the result so that we can release it."

"They [the results] are meant to be out within 24 hours. There has been such a discussion about it. We want to know what the result is."

Smith's startling breakthrough received timely support yesterday from Samuel Freas, president of Fina, the international swimming federation.

"When I saw her in Florida earlier this month I predicted

she would be the star of the Games," Freas said. "People suspect her vastly improved times because she is a woman, and 26 years old, but who can say for certain at what age development begins?"

Look at Sergei Bubka. Until he became a world-class pole-vaulter nobody realised he could also run 10.3sec for the 100m."

At 27 I've just finished in the top eight," she said last night. "For a small country like Britain, which doesn't provide much support, that's an achievement."

Okesola has to keep up with the rush of Jones

Boxing

Diary

Atlanta 1996

FOLA OKESOLA carries Britain's last hope of ring success when he makes his Olympic debut at the Alexander Memorial Coliseum today.

It is left to the Greenwoborn fighter of Nigerian parents to overcome the American Nate Jones to sustain British interest after the two-man team was reduced by half with the Liverpool featherweight David Burke's elimination on Monday.

Okesola is short on experience, having boxed for fewer than three years. But, unlike many American heavyweight Olympians, Chicago's Jones is not a big puncher or considered highly talented. So the Briton can go into the 91kg bout with some confidence.

The Americans have so far started fights at a high pace to pick up the points early while they are fresh.

It would be wise for Okesola to keep out of range in the opening round but, whatever he tries, it will be difficult to unsettle an American heavyweight on home soil.

Gold medal for awkwardness

Diary

Atlanta 1996

EVERYTHING in the United States is bigger than in little old Blighty — even the jobs worth. One British journalist took a cab 35 miles to the beach volleyball and tried to get out at the media entrance. "Don't get out of the car," said the uniformed security man. "It's OK I'm press," said the hack. "I don't care. You can't go in unless you arrive on the official transport, buddy. You're going to have to go back to town and get a bus." He would not be shifted until a moment of inspiration hit our man.

"What if I was in an official vehicle other than the bus?" he queried. "I guess I would let you in," said the guard. So the hack went round the corner, sat in the back seat of an NBC van, persuaded the driver to take him to the entrance and got in without a murmur.

KATHY GIANNINI of Sandy Springs was crammed into a tube train after the opening ceremony when the retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu offered her his seat. "I was thrilled," said Giannini, who turned down his offer. "I was so im-

pressed that he was riding the underground. Mother Teresa would do that."

THE Cuban delegation have found a way of sticking two fingers up at a restaurant which has encouraged locals to help if Cuban competitors wish to defect. The Mamba Cubano put up a sign saying customers must help to protect defecting Cubans. No Cubans have defected since the Games began but a Cuban security guard got the last laugh on the owner: "I loved it so much I stole your menu," he wrote in the guest book.

THE battle of Olympic cheerleaders is well underway with the early lead taken by Brazil, who have a star member called the Silver medalists in Kasahara and Naotoshi Yamada. The latter has cheered since 1964 and written a song for these Games entitled Your Smile is like a Gold Medal. Mitsuko even has business cards with her designated title: International Olympic Assistant Cheerleader.

MONGOLIA's team have found the transport problems. They are reportedly taking a golf cart every night from the security guards at the Olympic Village and using it to drive into town to various nightspots.

John Duncan

Cricket

News and Scores

0891 22 88+

Test Match

Live Commentary 28

Match Reports 29

Derbyshire	31	Middlesex	40
Derham	32	Northants	41
Essex	33	Nottingham	42
Glamorgan	34	Somerset	43
Gloucesters	35	Surrey	44
Hampshire	36	Sussex	45
Kent	37	Worcesters	46
Lancs	38	Worcester	47
Lincs	39	Yorkshire	48

Complete county scores

0891 22 88 30

Calls cost 20p/min plus 4p/min at all other times. Supplied by IMS, 15 Mark Lane, Leeds LS1 8LS.

Hotline: 0171 713 4473

Sport

@ The Guardian

OLYMPIC
The
capti
by va
ambi
K

0891 22 88 30

1550

OLYMPIC GAMES

The Dome captivated by vaulting ambition

Gymnastics

Richard Williams

KERRI STRUG was carried from the podium with a bandage around her ankle and a gold medal round her neck after a moment of heroic heroism had provided the climax to the United States team's victory in the women's team gymnastics event on Tuesday evening. Although the splash of drama eventually turned out to be not quite what it had seemed, nevertheless Strug, one of the less heralded members of the team of spring-boarded midgets in whom the dreams of suburban America are incarnated, gave us a lesson in courage and commitment that may not be surpassed in these Games. Strug, all 18 years, 4ft 9in and 6st 3lb of her, was the last member of her team to face the vault, the final piece of apparatus. Dominant Oceano, the 14-year-old darling of the team, had just landed on her backside in both her attempts, giving the team their first seriously poor marks and threatening a collective heart attack for the 32,048 spectators in the Georgia Dome. Starting the evening in second place behind the Russians after Sunday's compulsory session, the United States had quickly taken the lead and the progress of Strug, Moceanu, Shannon Miller, Dominique Dawes, Jaycie Phelps, Amy Chow and Amanda Borden around the apparatus had already turned into a delirious lap of honour. It was one of those nights when only the United States team seemed to exist in full colour, their star-spangled progress around the floor followed by all eyes in the packed Dome and by a posse of cameramen intent on capturing every hug, every tear. Maximising the psychological advantage, their coaches greeted each effort as if it were a masterpiece. The other three teams in the final session — the Russians, the Romanians and the Ukrainians — drifted around apparatus like ghosts, their faces drained of spirit and hope. But so critical is the scoring in gymnastics that as Strug stood on the runway, focusing herself and pushing the images of Moceanu's tumbles

out of her mind, the gold medal suddenly seemed to depend on her alone. A deep breath. A sprint. A running handstand and a leap from the springboard into a one-and-a-half twisting Yurchenko vault. And, this time, a landing which brought her too to earth. As she rose, wincing with pain and shaking her left leg, she looked at the scoreboard, which showed her a 9.1 and potential catastrophe. She had heard something snap, she said later. "It hurt a lot." Later it was determined that she had suffered a third-degree lateral sprain of the left ankle. You get two goes at the vault, and only the better one counts. If Strug was in any doubt about how to proceed, Bela Karolyi was there to prompt her. Karolyi, her personal coach, was standing behind the boards, looking anxiously at the injured left ankle. The former Romania team coach, he is a controversial figure often attacked for his draconian methods with young gymnasts. But soft hearts don't win gold medals and now there was only one thought in his head. As recounted by him afterwards, the exchange between them could have been scripted by Angela Brazil. "We got to go one more time," Karolyi shouted. "Do I have to do this again?" "Can you?" "I don't know yet. I will do it. I will. I will." She did. She said a prayer and again she sprang, sprang, flipped and landed — this time square on both feet, although she quickly pulled the left one up and held the landing pose on her right foot only, grimacing with the pain. Then she tried to hop away, but collapsed on the mat. The judges gave her 9.712. As it turned out, the United States would have won without it. But she had had no way of knowing that when she turned and ran in to face the pain of the last vault. As far as she was aware, the destiny of six other girls depended on it. If you came to the Olympics to see pure grit, here it was. Though all gold medals are equal, Strug's will always have a slightly different glow. But if you were Bela Karolyi, what would you have told her when she came limping back down the runway after that first vault?



Landing on her feet... the injured American Kerri Strug gets a lift from her coach Bela Karolyi after her bravery on the vault. PHOTOGRAPH: AMY SANCETTA

Britain fail to rally

Eventing

Jessica Fahey

BRITAIN'S three-day event team of Ian Stark, William Fox-Pitt, Karen Dixon and Gary Parsonage were unable to make up for Tuesday's disappointing cross-country and finished in fifth place with 312.90 points. Only Dixon managed a clear round in yesterday's show-jumping section. Australia took their third eventing gold medal and retained their title with 285.55, the United States took silver with 281.10 and New Zealand bronzes with 288.55. Australia's Wendy Schaeffer, riding with a broken leg held together by pressure pads and screws, produced the outstanding performance yesterday with a clear round. As the three best scores from each four-rider team count for the score, her team-mate Gillian Rolton was able to sit out this section; she had completed the cross-country through "sheer bloody-mindedness" after breaking her collar-bone and two ribs in a fall. "I was riding one-handed most of the way around," she said. Schaeffer, the 21-year-old Olympic debutant who broke her leg in a fall in May, finished with the best overall individual score after a clear round on her 16-year-old gelding Sunburst. In previous Olympics that would have earned her an individual gold, but in Atlanta the two events have been separated. Andrew Hoy, in his fourth Games, and Phillip Dutton both knocked down two fences, but Australia were so far ahead after the dressage and cross-country that nothing was likely to deny them the title. The US's husband and wife pair, David and Karen O'Connor, produced clear rounds within the time limit to secure silver despite three mistakes and a 1.50 time penalty by the two-time Olympic team gold medalist Bruce Davidson. Ireland, who had moved up from 11th to fifth after the cross-country phase, were eliminated. The final veterinary inspection deemed two of their horses unfit because of cuts and gashes sustained on the course, though neither was lame. Irish officials decided to withdraw the horses rather than present them for a reassessment. Of the 63 horses and riders who started the dressage, only 38 were left in the show-jumping, and the teams in contention for medals competed with three riders because one retired after the gruelling cross-country.

Today in Atlanta

Badminton Women's and men's doubles, men's singles 1/16. Baseball Nicaragua v Holland (m), Italy v Australia (m), US v Japan (m). Basketball Italy v Russia (w), US v Zaire (w), Korea v Lithuania (w), Cuba v Australia (w), Brazil v Japan (w), Canada v China (w). Beach volleyball Women's and men's prelims. Baseball Move prelims. Cycling Track, women's and men's and pursuit qualifying and semi-final, women's sprint cobs final, women's and men's sprint ropechage, men's ind pursuit final. Baseball Three-day individual speed and endurance. Football Women's and men's team kit. Gymnastics Women's ind all-around final. Handball Norway v Croatia (m), Algeria v France (m), Switzerland v Sweden (m), Brazil v Egypt (m), US v Russian Federation (m). Hockey Korea v South Africa (m), Spain v Great Britain (m), Holland v Germany (w), Malaysia v Great Britain (m), Holland v Australia (m), Australia v Korea (w), US v Argentina (w). Judo Women's and men's half-lightweight. Wrestling Semi-final. Baseball Men's Fin, women's Europe, men's and women's 470. Laser, Star. Shooting Men's 50m rifle prone, men's and women's 25m rapid-fire pistol, men's and women's 10m running target. Soccer Brazil v Germany (w), Korea v Italy (m), Nigeria v Japan (w), US v China (w), Brazil v Nigeria (m), Brazil v Germany (w), Japan v Nigeria (m). Baseball China v Holland (w), Japan v Australia (w), Chinese Taipei v Puerto Rico (w), Canada v US. Swimming Women's 200 back final, women's 800 free final, men's 50, men's 100 free prelims, men's 200 back prelim, free final, men's 200 medley final.

The best of the rest

Hockey

Pat Rowley

THE Great Britain women's team came wonderfully to life, playing far above their previous performances to defeat the United States 1-0 with a smartly taken goal by Scotland's Rhona Simpson. It was a performance that suddenly rekindled expectation. Britain could not have been expected to win against a side who had beaten the South Korean team that thrashed Britain 5-0, but in this climate fluctuations of form are probably inevitable. The United States, despite their unimpressive support and full-time training, were made to look legless, but then Britain had had the previous day off while the Americans had contested a closely fought game with Korea. Yet it was exhilarating to see Britain playing so much of a match in their opponents' half, especially after their

Touts

Paul Majendie

SOME 50 ticket touts from Atlanta have flown into Britain in search of the gold that Britain's competitors have proved unable to strike. And they are making a better fist of it up to \$1,000 a day. Equipped initially with a fistful of dollars and a scattergun sales pitch, they have muscled in on the turf of this hustlers' paradise. The public want tickets, everyone from Olympic sponsors and cash-strapped sports delegations are ready to sell them on the sly, and the fast-talking middleman is in business. Lawfully the scope is only slightly greater than in Britain, where tickets may no longer be sold on even at face value. Atlanta police can arrest anyone for selling tickets for more than \$3 over face value. But it is not a priority for a force battling traffic gridlock and potential terror-

Rowing

Christopher Dodd

THE good news is that the British lightweight double scullers and four reached tomorrow's semi-finals in repechages at Lake Lanier, correcting their mistakes of the preliminary heats. The bad news is that both of Britain's eights have been relegated to B finals for places 7-12 on Sunday. The women's sixth place in a repechage in which the first four qualified for the final was a sad end to a good medal prospect. Only six weeks ago at the Olympic qualifying regatta in Lucerne they lowered the course record set a week before by the United States crew, who here were the race winners. Garry Herbert, the cox who famously shed tears of joy on the podium after steering the Searle brothers to victory in Barcelona, gave his all only to see the men's eight edged out of second place, and qualifica-

Hockey

Pat Rowley

Though both teams displayed more gusto than talent, they provided quite a spectacle. Britain showed particular improvement in midfield, where Mandy Davies received better support, especially from Pauline Robertson. The strikers, benefitting from a good service, took the chance to express themselves. With better co-ordination and corner drills, Britain would have won by more than a single goal. In the first half Mandy Nicholls shot across goal. Davies shot over and, in one attack, Tina Cullen and Jane Sixsmith both let fly with reverse sweeps before Simpson took two vain jabs at a ball running away from her. The goal came in the 51st minute. Nicholls centered flat from near the right corner flag and Simpson met the ball with reverse stick angled to make a cunning deflection past Patti Shea. It was the promising horsewoman's 14th goal since she established herself in the team 25 matches ago.

Hockey

Pat Rowley

By Russia by a fifth of a second, Canada won. Herbert said: "It was real blood-and-guts stuff. I really thought we had done enough but it just wasn't to be." Today Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent have drawn the coxless pair's double semi-finals in their campaign for their second and Redgrave's fourth Olympic gold. The Australia and France pairs who qualified with the British from preliminary heats are in the other semi-final, together with two of the three repechage winners. The fastest repechage winners, the United States, are in Redgrave and Pinsent's semi. The coxless four of Rupert Obholzer, Jonny and Greg Searle and Tim Foster have the repechage winners Germany in their semi-final, with the world champions Italy and the Olympic champions Australia in the other semi. Peter Haining and Guin Batten have tough draws in their single-sculls events. Kate Mackenzie and Philippa Cross race in the semi-final of the coxless pairs.

Advertisement for the Alfa Romeo 155. The image shows a dark-colored Alfa Romeo 155 sedan parked on a road. Below the car, the text reads: 'ON YOUR MARKS. ALFA 155. THE NEW 1.8 TWIN SPARK 16V 140BHP FROM £15,580 (ON THE ROAD). GET SET. CALL 0200 718 000 FOR YOUR NEAREST DEALER. GO. ALFA 155. GOLD, SILVER, BRONZE AND RED.' There is also a small '3 YEAR WARRANTY' badge in the bottom right corner of the ad area.

All clear for Hills and Swinburn, page 12
Golden boy crashes out, page 14

Hussain and Lewis miss Test, page 13
Atlanta finds its first star, page 15

SportsGuardian

Olympian answer to Major's big idea

Palmer scathing after striking silver on a shoestring

David Hopps in Atlanta

PAUL PALMER'S elation at becoming Britain's first medallist here will dwindle the moment he arrives back in England. It is then that he will have to contemplate the loss of the coach who has guided him since childhood.

On the day John Major outlined his vision for the future, there could be few greater indictments of Britain's muddled search for sporting excellence than the financial pressures that threaten to end Palmer's association with his coach, Ian Turner, just as it has reached fruition.

Despite his euphoria at taking silver in the Olympic 400 metres freestyle, Palmer launched a stinging attack. "We have been second-class citizens and if we had the money I am sure we'd be able to turn silvers into gold medals. The rest of the world have been paying their athletes for 20 years. I am still living at home because I cannot afford to move out."

It was in the restless, insecure moments before the final that Palmer's relationship with Turner was underlined. "Sit with me for a while," he said. "Give me some company." And so they considered once more the race which they had chewed over a hundred times: stay above 1min 53sec for the first 200, set the pace if you have to, sit on the shoulder of the New Zealander Danyon Loader, and go for gold over the final length. Only when Loader outdid him on the final turn did Palmer recognise that it was a silver medal that beckoned.

What price do you put on an Olympic medal? Turner can answer "about £15,000 and rising". The head of PE at Yarborough School in Lincoln, he was allowed six months' unpaid leave by his head teacher to coach Palmer through to Atlanta. He was grateful for that.

"I said, 'This guy has a chance of a medal at the Olympics and I can't continue to teach and coach at this level'. The school was sympathetic, but I've had to finance things out of my savings. I've had some support from the ASA's Swim 2000 scheme, and the Lincoln club have been

supportive and enthusiastic, but we've just about run out of money. Thankfully the ASA is going to pay me in August and then it's back to work in September.

"Everything has to be sacrificed at this level, and I can't see how I can coach Paul any longer. For me it's decision time."

For Turner's wife Judith, a teacher at a school for the handicapped, and their two daughters, normal life has been severely disrupted. He accepts that swimming "occasionally bugs them". Coach and swimmer have spent three of the past six months out of England searching for decent long-course facilities.

Lincoln itself has what Palmer describes as "third-world facilities in a first-world nation, dodging up and down a 25m pool between all the schoolkids". The local council has not always viewed such problems sympathetically, but Palmer cannot afford to leave home.

Now that he is an Olympic medallist, things might change. But his sacrifices in getting there are representative of many struggling British sportsmen and women. The pursuit of excellence can be a lonely one.

"Ian has coached me since I was four," Palmer said. "He has been a father-figure. I owe him everything." His appeal has been heard many times before: decent facilities, employment for more coaches, and a public recognition of the obstacles that have to be overcome. Palmer missed the 1994 world championships after falling off a garage roof, and must have felt that Britain has been metaphorically throwing him off garage roofs ever since.

Palmer, at least, has been fortunate to achieve his dreams. "People had been telling me all day that I could be Britain's first medallist, and that had piled up the pressure. I had planned this race for four years but I hadn't planned on carrying so much expectation. When I saw the flag go up, it was a feeling that will never be topped in my life. It was sheer enjoyment, pride and a sense of relief. I don't think winning the Lottery could come close to it."

The Major plan, page 4



Rags to riches... Paul Palmer is jubilant after earning Britain's first medal of the Games. PHOTOGRAPH: VALERIA WITTEK



John Major: "What I would like to provide is a ladder of sporting opportunity for young people from the moment they get into school, into club life after school and develop a proper link between school and club."



Paul Palmer: "We need backing from the Government if we are to win more medals. But they only think about swimming and gymnastics every four years when the Olympics come round."

Why the British are not even at the ball game



Richard Williams

IT MUST be getting on for two years since my son taught me about the state of sport in British schools. He was eight years old and he'd just started coming home full of news about the game they'd had in the playground at lunchtime, and about how many goals he'd scored.

One day I asked him, out of curiosity, what kind of a ball they'd been playing with. "Oh," he said, matter-of-factly, "we're not allowed to play with a ball."

"What do you play football with, then?"

"A piece of wood bark. You know, from the climbing-frame pit."

Yes, I am aware that Pele learnt to play football with an orange on the beach. But he was Pele, and the beach was Copacabana. This is Chiswick. We can't give them much space, but we can afford a ball. It made me want to cry, if you must know.

I asked him why they'd been banned from using balls. He thought it was to save the school janitor from climbing up to get them out of the gutter. I didn't tell him I thought that was what janitors were for.

Instead I wrote a complaint to the head teacher. It worked, up to a point. She decided that half the school could play with a ball on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the other half on Wednesdays and Fridays. I suspect that the janitor's role had little to do with her original decision. Behind it, I imagine, was the effect of the pincer movement that has throttled the life out of sport in state schools in the last 20 years. On the one hand the impoverishment of their resources by the right, symbolised by the selling-off of playing fields. On the other, the left's insistence on abandoning the principle of competitive sport, compounded by the reluctance of underpaid teachers to maintain the tradition of out-of-hours games supervision.

John Major is making a lot of noise about sport this summer because the topic is on the national agenda in a big way

and he thinks it can win him some votes before the next election. For once, however, his timing is good. Five days into the Olympic Games, the British are still waiting for a hint of a gold medal. A mood of pessimism is spreading. If Gurnell is too old, and Edwards has a bad day, we may be down to Redgrave and Pinsent to give us consolation.

Such gloom is premature. Four years ago in Barcelona the situation at this stage looked very similar, with only Chris Boardman and his magic bike to cheer us up. Medals can and probably will come from unexpected quarters.

But the point is that virtually all our media are unexcited. What we need is a system providing the basis for the reasonable expectation of success, and in this connection Major is right to place an emphasis on sports scholarships. He will double them, he says, from 200 to 400, as well as looking for private money to fund specialist sports colleges.

THE British tend to look with scorn on the way US colleges dole out scholarships to oarsmen and footballers, to baseball and basketball players who have nothing to recommend them but an athletic prowess that can be used to add glory to the institution.

Yet is that, even in itself, such a bad thing? And in the case of someone like Dawn Staley, the brilliant little point guard of the US women's basketball team, we can see that it provided the only route to further education for a smart and spunky inner-city child whose family background made college fees about as realistic a proposition as a round-trip to Mars.

Paula Radcliffe, by contrast, is a middle-class English girl, but she provides an illustration of how sport and the academic life can co-exist. Britain's 5,000 metres prospect won a scholarship to Loughborough University. This summer she graduated with a first-class degree in European Studies. On Sunday in the Olympic Stadium she will be among the medal contenders.

As usual, this Government delivers proposals hedged about with mentions of private sponsors to pay the bills. The £100 million of the headlines has no meaning beyond propaganda until something is actually done. The solution doesn't end with letting children use a proper ball for their football match at lunchtime, but that is where it starts.

How the best of the world leave Britain standing

John Duncan

SNUGGLED in the medals table somewhere between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the British Olympic effort so far looks well off the pace. That is being set by countries who have funded national sports programmes for many years.

France has a central sports institute on the outskirts of Paris with room for 700 athletes in residence with access to 1,500 coaches and support staff, all paid for by the government. A promising gymnast might join at 12, a team sports player somewhat later, but all would receive a broad education as well as hot-house sport training.

The institute, covering 22 sports, was set up 40 years ago and when it was planned the French took a long look across the Channel. "Though we admire the British ability, spirit and attitude to sport,"

said Jean Claude Burel of the French Olympic Preparation Committee, "you never seem to commit enough money. Our programme has been a success and you'll find most of our medallists here have been through the system."

In China the ministry of sport funds nine institutes in Beijing alone, with every other major city also possessing one. A child will go to a sports institute for education and sports training from the age of seven for swimmers and gymnasts or 14 for basketball and soccer players.

Poland are one of the big surprises of the Games so far, but they ascribe their medal haul more to financial incentives than a national sports system. "One of the keys to our improvement," said Zbigniew Kumidior, of the Polish Olympic Committee, "has been greater financial support from the government and the lottery."

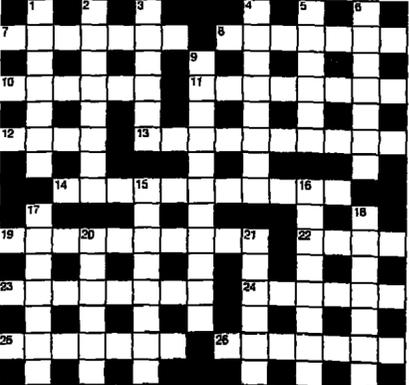
Less surprising has been

the success of the United States, who benefit from a college programme that identifies quality performers early and offers them free education with scholarships. The popularity and financial security of college sport attracts top coaches to work full-time with athletes. After college, athletes benefit from the legacy of the 1984 Olympics when a fund was set up from the profits of the Games. That has grown to \$189 million (\$122 million) and since 1993 \$115 million in grants have been handed out to governing bodies.

Britain took the idea for a central academy from the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra, born out of Australian failure at the 1976 Olympics. But, critics say it has had little impact in some sports; in tennis, swimming and athletics, performances have slipped. But of Australia's 500 competitors here, 213 are products of the AIS.

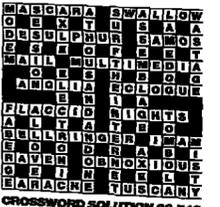
Guardian Crossword No 20,714

Set by Rufus



- Across**
- 7 The baseball circuit (4,3)
 - 8 He can't love, sadly, and is to be sexually unfaithful (5,2)
 - 10 Tease about record of Mary's husband (8)
 - 11 You have to put up with the person (4,4)
 - 12 Simple heart of Father Benedict (4)
 - 13 Large thing made to fit a square corner (5,5)
 - 14 Fear of being wrongly partitioned (11)
 - 19 Wilde's version of "The Lady of the Lake" (10)
 - 22 Pickpockets may be lucky (4)
 - 23 Tolerate a girl in New York (8)
 - 24 Find company in one churchman or another (6)

- Down**
- 1 Bogey-man (7)
 - 2 Recall soldiers and arm (8)
 - 3 Effusive oil-producer? (6)
 - 4 It may control the oven cooking the roast (8)
 - 5 Forces servant to be a comic character (6)
 - 6 The loss-making accommodation for students (7)
 - 9 Dramatic actress in great need of new parts (11)
 - 15 Corresponding but never meeting (8)
 - 16 Regulation I ignored in making guns (8)
 - 17 Stray U.S. serviceman turns up in female attire (7)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,714

- 18 A rugby player, too fat to be fit (7)
 - 20 Out-moded love is destined for failure (6)
 - 21 Object I've put into the salad (6)
- Solution tomorrow**

Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 333 238. Calls cost 39p per min, cheap rates 49p per min at other times. Services supplied by ATS

VITTEL
NATURAL SOURCE
MINERAL WATER

feels even better when you drink

Sport96

Read the award-winning team of Richard Williams, Frank Keating, Matthew Engel, David Lacey, Mike Selvey and David Hopps in the unique sports magazine free with the Guardian on Friday

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.